

The Germans had attained their object. The retreat of at least three French corps had been delayed not less than 24 hours. The French army would not be on the 15th, yes, not even on the 16th, assembled at Mars la Tour—Gravelotte.

The success might have been far greater if army headquarters, on hearing of the retreat of the enemy, had sent forward the entire First Army and had occupied towards evening the position in which the French had been posted in the morning. This would have resulted by itself in a decisive offensive across the Moselle below Metz. Army headquarters was, however, far from making such a forward movement. It had sent, on the contrary, during the battle, and finally in the evening, repeated orders to stop the engagement and to return to the previous positions. The commanding generals of the VII and I Corps (v. Zastrow and v. Manteuffel), found themselves unable to obey. They could expose their troops to the losses of a difficult attack, but not to the greater ones of a retreat. The soldiers had to be strengthened in their confidence in themselves and in their leaders, and not weakened. General von Manteuffel let himself be persuaded, however, to retreat in the night, while General von Zastrow remained, ready for combat, in the positions taken during the battle, held the battlefield alone until morning, and left only when the French had disappeared from the right bank.

Had the battle of Colombey—Nouilly brought out nothing else it would have at least clearly shown the unfitness of a position as narrow as possible, as deep as possible, and with reserves as strong as possible. Only weak advance guards could be detached from the narrow front. For support, detachments could be brought up only gradually. Absolute confidence had been placed on compressed masses and it was found that this compelled attacks of strong positions occupied by superior numbers to be made by small detachments and with the thinnest of lines. It had to be discovered that the enemy, whom it was desired to drive back, deployed on a wider front and threatened a crushing envelopment. The reserve, whose problem it was to meet such a danger and itself make such an envelopment, thought itself posted too far to the rear to be able to give any aid

on the 14th. The VIII Corps thought to advance on the morrow, not to prolong its own wing and turn that of the enemy, but to reinforce a frontal attack with fresh forces, a frontal attack which had already seen its termination at the Metz fortifications.

Map 76. Since the French withdrew to the west and the Germans to the east, an ever widening space formed between them. An order from Moltke was to put an end to this unwholesome state, which would have sent the First Army back to the victoriously gained positions, and then, apparently, further beyond the Moselle. In the meanwhile, the King had ridden forward with his suite. It could be seen from the heights of Flanville, that the field this side of Metz was free. On the other side, however, in the valley of the Moselle, around St. Quentin and up the plateau toward Gravelotte, clouds of dust were rising. It was clear that the enemy was retreating by the road to Verdun. The head of the 100,000 men, who had fought the day before at Colombey, might go one day's march forward, but their rear would still be in Metz in the evening and days would go by before this column, and possibly those parts of the French Army which had gone before, would be able to shift from the Moselle to the Meuse. The enemy must be prevented from completing this march. He must be forced to stand and accept battle. The simplest and surest means to this end was to send the First Army across the Moselle below Metz and the Second above that city and to leave the protection against the eastern side of the fortress to the II Corps. This means had to be abandoned, as the First Army could not be entrusted, at least in the beginning, with an absolutely separate and independent operation. Thus, the problem of pursuit fell to the share of the Second Army. Its right wing was to be followed by two corps (the VII and VIII) of the First Army. The I Corps was entrusted with the observation of the eastern front.

Map 78. On the French side, on the 14th, the retreat was begun as well as was possible, in view of the general ignorance as to what should be done, the perplexity and disorder, over roads which were overcrowded and in bad condition. Only late in the night of the 15th, did the last units of the leading corps reach the objectives assigned them. The Cavalry

Divisions of Valabregue (of the II Corps), Forton (1st Reserve Cavalry Division) and du Barail (3d Reserve Cavalry Division) were at Vionville, Gravelotte, and Malmaison, the II Corps (two and one half divisions) along the main road between Rozerieulles and Longeville, the VI Corps thence along the railroad as far as Woippy. Early on the 15th, they were to march as follows: Forton to Mars la Tour, du Barail to Doncourt, the II Corps to Rezonville, and as soon as the VI had reached the latter point, further to Mars la Tour. The following had found their way to the evacuated camps: the Guard to Longeville and Moulins, the III Corps to Plappeville and Devant les Ponts, the IV to Woippy and east as far as the Moselle. These three corps had received orders to continue the march as soon as possible. The crowded condition of the roads as well as the utter exhaustion of the troops kept them from doing so. Only the Guard could be taken in the evening to the height of Gravelotte, in rear of the VI Corps. Two divisions of the III Corps succeeded in working through via Plappeville to Verneville and La Folie. Two other divisions, as well as the IV Corps remained in the valley of the Moselle during the night of the 16th. These five divisions had to be awaited before an offensive could be undertaken or the march to Verdun continued. The rear of the French army was thus still at Metz and its head had come to a standstill before it had been anticipated.

For days Moltke had urged the Second Army to send the mass of cavalry to the left bank of the Moselle for reconnaissance. Only Rheinbaben's Division (5th Cav. Div.) and the 3d Cavalry Brigade of the Guard had been in response thereto, though late, utilized for this purpose. The remaining two and two thirds divisions were kept back so that they could be on hand in the ultimate attack in the hoped for battle on the Nied or in the vicinity of Metz.

The patrols ascertained that the French camps between Magny and Chieuvilles had remained unchanged throughout the 13th. In confirmation of these reports, a German brought news from Metz that, up to the evening of the 13th, no retreat of the French in a westerly direction had taken place. About noon on the 14th, patrols found the Metz—Verdun road at Vionville free of troops in both

directions. Early on the 15th, Colonel Count Groeben, who, with a few squadrons and a battery, had penetrated to the vicinity north of Augny, on the right bank of the Moselle, fired on hostile camps on the other bank between Longeville and Moulins.

Rheinbaben received orders to advance on the 15th as far as the Metz—Verdun road. After the departure of all flank detachments and of the covering detachments, six of the 36 squadrons and one battery under General von Redern reached the vicinity of Mars la Tour. The battery entered into an artillery duel with the batteries of Forton's Division. Redern gradually received reinforcements attracted by the thunder of guns. With the help of reinforcements, he was going to attack the hostile cavalry. But before the attack could be executed, the French cavalry retired to Vionville. The II Corps thus remained at Rezonville and joined at this point the VI, whose right wing reached as far as St. Marcel, thus forming a great mass, increased in the evening by the arrival of the Guard Corps near Gravelotte. Naturally these particulars could not be learned by the German cavalry, but it did learn that the strong hostile forces had stopped their advance from Rezonville and east of the latter on the Metz—Verdun road. North of this road German patrols had encountered strong cavalry, not immediately followed by infantry. The picture might have been completed if the First Army had ascertained by patrols on the left bank of the Moselle below Metz or on the high right bank of the river what part of the French army had remained in the valley of the Moselle between Metz, St. Quentin, and Plappeville. But even without such reconnaissance, it was clearly determined that the French army, in its march to Verdun, had not advanced beyond Vionville and Malmaison. Its masses stood between these points and Metz. On the 16th it would probably again advance, extending to Mars la Tour and further west; no great change, however, should be expected. Should part of the army have marched by the road to Briey, the French forces would thus only be weakened for the impending battle.

Moltke had already warned in the evening of the 14th, "advance along the left bank of the Moselle against the communicating roads: Metz—Verdun, in large force" and had telegraphed in the forenoon of the 15th: "Pursuit on the Metz—Verdun road important." It was scarcely necessary to add in the evening of the 15th: "The fruits of the victory (on the 14th) are to be harvested by a strong offensive of the Second Army against the road from Metz to Fresnes as well as from Etain to Verdun," and further "according to the present point of view the decision of the campaign rests in driving the main forces of the enemy, escaping from Metz, in a northerly direction."

Map 79.

There was, consequently, no doubt as to what the Second Army must do at noon on the 15th. The French army, whose right wing stood today at Vionville, would stand on the morrow at Mars la Tour or further west and was to be driven northward. For this purpose the right, and perhaps also the so far unreconnoitered left wing, had to be turned, the one pushed away from Verdun, the other from Metz. In order to reach this goal, all available corps had to be used, all existing or to be established crossings of the Moselle must be utilized. Of the six corps, the IX was with its head at Peltre advancing to the battlefield of the 14th, the III was at Louvigny. The 20th Division of the X was at Pont-a-Mousson, the main body of the 19th Division at Thiaucourt, Lyncker's half-brigade at Noveant. The Guard Corps, at Dieulouard, had sent an advance guard as far as Les Quatre Vents, the IV Corps was to advance on that day to Marbach, the XII to Nomey, the I to Han on the Nied. The further advance of the IX Corps was to be via Corny and Ars to Gravelotte and Rezonville, of the III via Arry to Vionville, of the X, followed by the XII, from Thiaucourt at Mars la Tour, of the Guard Corps and the IV to Hannonville and Latour. The corps stood at various distances from their objectives. In the afternoon of the 15th the IX Corps could march to Corny, the III across the Moselle, the X beyond Thiaucourt, the Guard Corps to Flirey. On the 16th, three Corps could surely be brought against the enemy, the VII, VIII, XII, and IV following as reserves. The reserves would not have been

so strong, had the First Army gone around Metz on the north. But then there would have been not four, but seven corps available for the attack, and it would have been truly an annihilating attack.

The task of the Second Army was clear. Moltke's order was to advance by the two roads leading from Metz to Verdun. Where the enemy was on these roads had been ascertained by the cavalry as well as circumstances allowed.

It is, however, wrong to think that reports in war from the cavalry are of any importance or even desired. The higher leader generally makes himself a picture of friend and foe for whose delineation personal desires do the principal work. Should reports received coincide with these wishes, they are laid aside with complaisance. Should they contradict them, they are considered entirely false and justify the final conclusion that the cavalry had once more failed entirely. The Second Army, in its advance from the Saar to the Moselle, regarded its task of turning the enemy only as a secondary one. Its principal aim was to prepare itself for an unlikely attack by the enemy. Now, having arrived at the Moselle, the enemy could no longer escape and had to accept battle. The Second Army paid no attention to him, taking heed only of another adversary who was said to have escaped, in the greatest hurry, from the Moselle to beyond the Meuse and who must be pursued in order to be forced into a battle on the Marne. The reports of the cavalry were considered absolutely false, resting on imagination and on pessimistic views. The battle on the 14th had not been waged by a French army, not by three corps, eight divisions, 100,000 men, but by a weak rear guard, which, after heroic resistance against superior forces has perhaps reached only Rezonville on the 15th. The task of the Second Army is, consequently, a march to the Meuse.

Map 78. For this purpose, the XII Corps must go to Pont-a-Mousson on the 16th, its advance guard to Regnieville; the Guard Corps to Bernécourt, its advance to Rambaucourt, the IV Corps to Les Sezerais, its advance guard toward Toul; the II to Buchy, the III and the X Corps to strike the main Metz—Verdun road, and with this opportunity, to

make short work of the weak hostile rear guard which has remained halted at Rezonville.

Sixteen German corps had invaded France, ten had caught up with the hostile army and brought it to a halt, seven could attack in the first line, two were to fight the decisive battle.

If only these two corps had at least been utilized conjointly! Each however, follows its own promptings and the misleading "orientation" given it from army headquarters. Of the X Army Corps Schwarzkoppen's half division with the 3d Guard Cavalry Brigade (Brandenburg) was sent from Thiaucourt to St. Hilaire. Probably so that it might still catch a few stragglers. Half of Lehmann's Brigade was to advance from Thiaucourt, Lyncker's half brigade from Noveant to Mars la Tour, the former to support Rheinbaben, the latter to join Lehmann. Kraatz with the 20th Division was to march from Pont-a-Mousson to Thiaucourt and serve as a strategic reserve for the others.

All these units, led by true soldiers and brave men, though scattered to the four winds, were to find themselves united on the battlefield. But this was not yet sufficient to wage a successful combat with the French army. The greatest merit for having fought one of the most glorious battles of the century, belongs to General von Alvensleben and to the III Corps, commanded by him. Convinced of the correctness of Moltke's plan of anticipating the enemy on the left bank, the general had looked on with impatience and doubt at the attempts, on the part of army headquarters to fight and win victories on the right of the river by "strategically offensive and tactically defensive" methods. As soon as the report of the battle of Colombey—Nouilly had arrived, he did not allow himself to be kept back any longer and marched independently toward the Moselle. Although he was again held back en route for some time by army headquarters, he still succeeded in carrying out his intention and stood in the evening of the 15th with the 6th Division at Pagny and south of it to opposite Champey, with the 5th Division at Noveant on the left and with the 6th Cavalry Division at Corny on the right bank of the Moselle so as to march early on the 16th with the two latter

via Gorze to Vionville, with the former via Arnaville, Onville, Chambley, and Mars la Tour to Jarny. Here he encountered the enemy. Whether the latter were weak or strong, he wanted to get ahead of him on both roads leading from Metz to Verdun, prevent him from retreating and if repulsed by superior strength, to retire in the direction Verdun, hoping that the X Army Corps and perhaps still other parts of the Second Army, might bring the enemy to a stand and force him to retreat to Metz.

The III Corps was still at the beginning of its marches when the Chief of Staff of the X Corps, Lieut. Colonel von Caprivi, arrived at Rheinbaben's Division in Xonville. "Something ought to be done to ascertain whether the cavalry was right in reporting that the enemy is between Rezonville and Metz or, as army headquarters holds, he is already on the Meuse." The question could be answered by a simple calculation: the enemy was still at Metz early on the 14th. Since noon of that day, no Frenchman had gone in the direction from Metz to Vionville, the enemy must, consequently, at least inasmuch as the main road has been used, be between the latter point and Metz. This calculation, however, was not considered as sufficient. An attack alone can give the desired information. Rheinbaben advanced, brought his artillery into action against the cavalry camp at Vionville, where the men were busy cooking, feeding and watering their horses, etc. The consequences were: disorderly retreat of Forton's Division, sudden flight of the nearby trains, but also the deployment and advance of the infantry at Rezonville. The line: St. Marcel—Vionville, was occupied by the 1st and 3d Divisions of Canrobert (VI Corps), Frossard's 2d Division (II Corps), lengthened the line south of the road, while the 1st Brigade and Lapasset's Brigade turned south where Hussars of the 6th Cavalry Division had shown themselves. Canrobert's⁽³²⁾ 4th Division remained at Rezonville, the Guard at Gravelette. Thus the III Corps found an already deployed army in its front. The 8th Brigade, at the head of the 5th Division, had to fight its way from Gorze in the direction of

⁽³²⁾ Of Canrobert's Corps only the 1st, 3d, and 4th Divisions and one regiment of the 2d had reached Metz. The rest were prevented from continuing the rail journey by the Germans.

Vionville through the woods of St. Arnould and Vionville. The 10th Brigade succeeded gradually in surrounding the enemy opposing it on the road to Vionville and in driving him off in a northeasterly direction. The 5th Division was already engaged in a fierce combat, when the 6th Division deployed from Sauley with the 12th Brigade on each side of the road to Vionville and with the 11th farther south.

After hours of fighting, Vionville, the height east of it, Flavigny, and the northern edge of the woods of Vionville, and St. Arnould were taken. A weak point was found in the new French position where the front facing west joined the front facing south and where an attack was possible from two sides. This was taken advantage of by the 10th Brigade, reinforced by Lyncker's half brigade, and Valaze's Brigade, opposing it, was driven in a northerly direction on Bastoul's Brigade. As the other Prussian brigades attacked simultaneously, Frossard's entire Corps (II) had to retreat in disorder. Colin's Brigade of the VI Corps joined the retreat north of the road.

In order to protect these two brigades from pursuit, Canrobert had the other brigade of the 3d Division, Sonnay's, turn half left and ordered the 1st Division (Tixier's), advancing from St. Marcel, to join in the extension. An annihilating flank attack threatened the 24th Regiment and one battalion of the 20th which, so far, had alone formed the weak left flank north of the road to Verdun. Bredow's Cavalry Brigade (three squadrons of the 7th Cuirassiers and three of the 16th Uhlans) was thrown against the hostile troops along the old Roman road. The first line was ridden down, the artillery line was pierced, the men and horses cut down. The second line could not stop the charging cavalry. The batteries on the heights farther in rear limbered up and fled. After a charge of 3000 paces a fresh French cavalry detachment opposed the exhausted troops. The long road had to be covered once more.

The results were: Bredow's Brigade lost half its numbers, ten French batteries left the battlefield, Canrobert's 3d Division declined to take the offensive. It formed from now on the right wing of the position taken by Canrobert's 4th Division, by the Grenadier Division of the Guard and by Lapasset's Brigade, cutting through the Roman road to

Map 80.

the Verdun road immediately west of Rezonville and reaching to the Rezonville—Gorze road, near the Maison Blanche. Montaudon's Division of the III Corps was sent as a reserve east of Rezonville. West of Gravelotte stood Voltigeur's Division of the Guard and east of it Frossard's defeated Corps.

The front of this position, occupied by seven and one half divisions, could not be attacked with any hope of success and forces were lacking to turn it. But also an attack against the two Prussian divisions would be repulsed by infantry and artillery fire and mostly by the resolute resistance of the leaders and troops. A more or less lively combat was continued by the artillery of both sides. On the other hand the combat in the afternoon raged on the Prussian left wing north of the Verdun road. Here Tixier's Division (1st) of the VI Corps had arrived from St. Marcel at the old Roman road. To the right as far as Bruville, Leboeuf (I Corps) would come up from Verneville, as soon as he had assembled his three divisions. Further to the right, Ladmirault (IV Corps), who had been advancing since early morning with three divisions from Woippy via St. Privat and Amansvillers to Doncourt was expected. Should these seven divisions advance simply the one beside the other, the III Corps, held in front by such a strong force, would be absolutely annihilated and the X Corps would not suffice to stop for any material time the broad flank attack. The French would win a great victory on the 16th and would have the choice of pursuing this victory on the following day or, at least, of retreating unmolested across the Meuse.

However, two divisions, one of Leboeuf's (I) Corps and one of Ladmirault's (III) Corps deployed too late from their deep, compressed march columns. Thus two divisions were absent from the battle. The remaining five, however, were sufficient to carry out the overpowering flank attack.

The weak left wing of the 6th Division opposite Tixier, had to be withdrawn north of the Verdun road. The hill east of Vionville formed from then on an advanced point in the line of battle. It ran thence to the left to the Bois de Tronville, occupied by Lehmann's half brigade which

had just arrived. Against these woods, occupied by only a few battalions, was now directed an attack by Tixier from the northeast, by Leboeuf from the north, and by Grenier's Division of Ladmirault's Corps from direction of Bronville. Tixier was arrested by the left wing of the 6th Division. Leboeuf with his two divisions became but slightly engaged in a fire fight. He had received orders in the morning, among others, to "hold strongly," and, he would hold to this order now where he should have quickly driven in a weak enemy. Deep formation of his forces, keeping back strong reserves, seemed to him the best means to support the powerful flanking attack and to cooperate in any undertaking which was to decide the fate of the two armies. The concentric attack of one part of Tixier's Division and of Grenier's sufficed however, to force Lehmann's half brigade to retreat. It gradually evacuated first the northern and then the southern part of the woods and retired to Tronville which was prepared for obstinate resistance. But how long could this point be held situated as it was in the rear of the II Corps position?

At this moment of danger the 20th Division (Kraatz) appeared. It had started from Pont-a-Mousson in the morning, marched from Thiaccourt to the sound of the cannon, detached a few battalions to the sorely pressed 5th Division and arrived with nine battalions at Tronville after a march of 24 miles. The advance of two battalions thence against the Bois de Tronville sufficed to bring about a change of the situation. Ladmirault saw himself threatened in the front and believed himself menaced in the right flank by an "army of infantry." Grenier's Division was taken back, Kraatz following into the Bois de Tronville. A long combat took place there. But the danger, which Tixier, Leboeuf, and Grenier had evoked with four divisions seemed averted for the time being.

In the meanwhile, Cissey's Division which had taken second place in Ladmirault's marching column had come up. It received orders to attack the enemy in rear and thus bring about the decision. The prospect of success was of the best. Should Cissey march west of the Bois de Tronville, Grenier would be freed. Kraatz's Division would retreat and should Leboeuf and Tixier join, it would be pos-

sible to attack the rear of the III Corps with five divisions while it would have to face in its front the attack of at least four and one half divisions.

Unfortunately Cissey met on his way the "army of infantry" i.e., Schwarzkoppen's half-division (Wedell's Brigade, the 16th and 57th Regiments). It had marched in the morning from Thiaucourt to St. Hilaire and thence, to the sound of the cannon, to Mars la Tour. It received orders there to attack the right flank of the enemy. What had been indicated to it as such was probably Grenier's right flank but not Cissey's, hidden from sight by the hills. Thus it came upon the latter's center.

The long march, made in the fierce heat of the August day, had completely exhausted the strength of the thirsty troops. But the cry "there is the enemy" removed all trace of fatigue from the Westphalians. With beating hearts, but resolute courage they advanced against the superior enemy who had taken position on the road to Bruville in rear of a deep ravine. The attacker disappeared for a short while in the ravine after which men climbed the steep slope. At the upper edge rapid fire at 150, 100, 50 paces met them. They answered with a like fire. Two lines, about six files deep, two immense white clouds, continually pierced by short streaks of lightning, a thundering noise and nothing to be seen until the comrade suddenly drops alongside. Impossible to halt. "Up! Forward!" sounds the order. The voice dies. But those nearest see the leader brandishing the sabre, waving high the flag. One man calls to the next. The line storms onward. But now the overlapping wings of the enemy begin to turn inward and pour infernal fire on flank and rear of the storming Germans. Back, what is left, back into the ravine and up the hill, ever pursued by the bullets of the enemy. Artillery attempted to protect the fleeing troops. Three squadrons of the Dragoons 1st Regiment of the Guard advanced against the enemy. They found a low spot through which they could approach unseen and fell on the right flank. But it was still too broad for the small crowd. The officers and the foremost troopers broke the line of skirmishers right into the midst of bullets and bayonets.

The attacks of the infantry and cavalry were a complete failure. Wedell's Brigade and the 1st Dragoons no longer existed. The French had an open space before them for the execution of the great annihilating attack with division from the right flank. But Cisseu remained on the southern edge of the ravine. The effect, produced by the attacks, was too impressive. The French were sure that new and stronger enemies would renew the attack which they had luckily repulsed. "You can not make us believe that your regiment would have attacked us with such force if it had no army corps in its rear," was said the following day to an officer of the 16th Regiment who had been wounded and taken prisoner. Since he did not feel strong enough for the attack by another Wedell's Brigade, Ladmirault found it advisable to take Cisseu's Division back to Bruville and Doncourt, being followed by Grenier and where the still absent Division of Lorencez arrived at dark.

The audacious attacks of Wedell's Brigade and of the 1st Dragoons of the Guard, though repulsed, decided Ladmirault to retreat and by this retreat, the battle was decided in favor of the Prussians.

A cavalry combat on the extreme left wing west of the Yron brook in which General von Barby with six regiments repulsed Legrand's Division and France's Brigade, as well as the occupation of the Boise de Tronville by Kraatz's Division could not increase this decision, but only confirm it. The French right wing, Ladmirault, Leboeuf, and Tixier had evacuated the battlefield or kept up, for appearances' sake, a gradually slackening rifle fire. The left wing still held the position at Rezonville. Its front was too strong to be overpowered. But reinforcements were arriving.

At the head of the VIII Corps was the 32d Brigade which had been joined voluntarily by the 11th Regiment of the IX Corps⁽³⁴⁾ and which had crossed the Moselle at Corny in the afternoon, still wishing to reach the battlefield. The Division Commander, General von Barnekow, had his nine battalions deploy along the road to Gorze south of the Bois des Ognons intending to strike the flank and

⁽³⁴⁾ The IX Corps had subsequently received the order to follow the III Corps and to cover it on the road to Metz.

rear of the enemy, stationed at Rezonville, through the woods. The sorely pressed 5th Division, however, demanded immediate assistance. Barnekow could do nothing else than go via Gorze along the narrow ridge along the road to Rezonville, to attack by regiments and, after initial success, to retreat, repulsed by the rapid fire of superior reserves. After three attempts and three failures, the Prussians were forced to retreat to the heights immediately north of the edge of the woods while the French occupied the heights north of the Maison Blanche.

The 25th Division had likewise crossed the Moselle at Corny. At its head, General von Wittich with the 49th Brigade (4 battalions, 4 squadrons, 3 batteries) entered the Bois des Ognons, drove back a battalion of the Chasseurs of the Guard, reached the northwestern edge and directed thence his fire against the reserves retreating to Rezonville. Further advance was barred by hostile troops, still holding out in the eastern part of the woods. Only at 10:00 PM, was the battle ended at this point and a bivouack occupied in a clearing.

This much had been accomplished, that the masses, which had been assembled at Rezonville, marched to Gravelotte and beyond in by no means an orderly way. Also the road had been shown by which great success was to be achieved and on which it might have been attained, had General von Barnekow been permitted to advance with his nine battalions through the Bois des Ognons against the enemy's line of retreat between Rezonville and Gravelotte, and had the 25th Division joined this attack via Ars east of the Mance ravine. The French would then, probably, have been driven in a northerly direction and against the frontier of Luxembourg and Belgium as demanded by Moltke.

Such aims, however, were far from Prince Frederick Charles who, on hearing that the III Corps was engaged in a serious battle, had hurried to the battlefield in the afternoon. He thought that he had an indecisive battle before him. In order to win a victory, he ordered a general attack in the evening, i.e., to do what the III Corps had been attempting for 10 hours by straining every nerve,

but which met its natural end through losses, exhaustion, lack of ammunition, and the numerical superiority in that strong position. The order could be executed only in a small way, since the artillery lacked horses and the infantry ammunition. The attack of the weak infantry, which had been assembled at dark and of two cavalry brigades went to pieces in face of the rapid fire of still intact French battalions. Had it succeeded, the enemy would have been driven back in the direction which he had chosen for the retreat.

The order of the Prince was inspired by a high-minded feeling of proud courage, but caused the glorious day to end in a failure. That more had not been achieved in combat must be attributed to the inferior numbers of the troops and neither to the leaders nor to lack of heroism. Nothing, however, could change the result, least of all by a frontal attack with quite inadequate numbers. There was every cause to be satisfied. What 60,000 men could achieve against 164,000, had been achieved in the highest degree. It was sufficient that the inferior numbers had forced the superior ones to abandon all offensive movement and to retire to more or less distant positions. A retreat to Verdun was thus rendered impossible and there remained only the choice of a retreat in a northern direction or back to Metz.

It can scarcely be said that the French plan of battle, whether thought out by Bazaine or imposed by circumstances themselves, would have rendered the success of the Germans easier. The intention of holding the III Corps in a strong position, of safeguarding the left flank against all envelopment, and of attacking with a very strong right wing, was very promising of success. The plan failed through the mode of execution and through the conviction of Bazaine and his corps commanders that they had before them not a small force, but a vast superiority in numbers. This was not overrating the enemy. According to not exaggerated calculations the mass of the German Army could and must be on the ground if not in the early morning, then at least during the course of the day. To have persuaded the French to take this view and belief in the superiority of the enemy is the great feat of General von

Alvensleben, and of the III Corps. The means by which the general sought to reach his aim was, as the French General Staff Account calls it, "a brutal offensive."

Had Alvensleben's Corps and Schwarzkoppen's half-division wisely and sensibly taken up a good position, they would have been annihilated without being compensated by a great success for their sacrifice. Attack and repeated attack, recklessly and without consideration, had brought unparalleled losses but had also brought victory and, it may well be said, the decision of the campaign.

For, although the last repulsed attack had given Bazaine a shadowy right to report officially: "The Prussian army, defeated at all points, retreated," he betrayed his secret thoughts by the words directed to his staff officers that "The French army must be saved." To bring the army into safety across the Meuse was no longer possible if the Germans, as was to be expected, should follow in a northerly direction. To act according to Moltke's desire and to allow themselves to be driven to the Belgian—Luxembourg frontier, would have been courting destruction. Nothing remained to do but what Bazaine expressed in continuation of his words, "and therefore return to Metz." This was salvation, at least for a time, during which many things might happen; possibly a better deliverance than that which might be vouchsafed by the junction at Chalons of the beaten and pursued Army of the Rhine with the remnants of MacMahon's troops and with the Guard Mobile battalions, arriving from Paris. To go to Metz immediately was not expedient since claim had just been made of a brilliant victory and since the enemy was too close to the left wing. A new battle, but one without prospect of success, must be fought.

THE BATTLE OF GRAVELLOTTE—ST. PRIVAT

The night of 16-17 August was passed by the French Army as follows: the three divisions of the IV Corps at Doncourt, two divisions of the III and the 1st Division (Tixier) of the VI Corps between St. Marcel, Villers aux Bois, and the Romer Strasse, the remaining eight and one half divisions, two of the III and two of the VI Corps, two

and one half divisions of the II Corps, and two of the Guard Corps between Rezonville, Gravelotte, the northern edge of the Bois des Ognons and the height south of Rezonville.

Almost immediately opposite extended the German outposts from the Mance ravine obliquely through the Bois des Ognons along the northern edge of the Bois de Vionville, half way between Rezonville on the one side, Flavigny—Vionville on the other side toward the Bois de Tronville, which encompassed them on the north. In rear of these stood the 25th Division in the Bois des Ognons, the 16th on the Gorze—Rezonville road, the III Corps at Vionville, the X at Tronville with a flank guard against Mars la Tour. In the night the IX Corps started to the heights west of Gorze, the XII, via Thiaucourt, the Guard Corps via Beney, St. Benoit, and Chambley to Mars la Tour. Immediately in rear of the IX Corps the VII was to follow across the Moselle to Gravelotte, the VIII, leaving Gorze to the west, to Rezonville.

Bazaine believed that on the 17th he had been engaged with the First and the Second German Armies and was certain that on the 17th, the Third Army would join these enemies. This assumption was not based on the imaginings of a mind which saw everything through black glasses: the three German armies might have been easily assembled at that time between the Moselle and the Meuse. But, by keeping only to the undisputable facts, that the French army had retreated on the 16th, that the enemy stood close opposite, and that the reinforcements from the Moselle were advancing, Bazaine was forced to believe that he was facing a superiority, if not in numbers, at least in efficiency. It may thus be easily understood that he did not wish to attack. This had not succeeded on the 16th and would have been a complete failure on the 17th. He did not want to remain stationary, for he had to expect that he would be surrounded on the right and left and driven back in a northwesterly direction. He could not face his army to the right in order to march in a too lengthy column along the hostile front via Conflans to Verdun or to the left via Gravelotte to Metz. He would soon have been halted and would have found himself in the same situation as before.

More favorable was the outlook for a retreat via Briey. He would go away from the enemy in a practically perpendicular direction. To the left and right of the Gravelotte—Briey road there were two other roads via Homecourt and Moineville and thus the marching columns could be considerably shortened. Nevertheless they would still be so long that, to avoid being attacked by the enemy they would have to start on the march in the evening of the 16th. This, however, was not possible. The troops, with the exception of the IV Corps which had maintained its spirit, were almost disbanded, greatly mixed up and all in the depressed and discouraged spirits of a defeated army. To form three narrow columns in the night or even in the morning of the 17th, for the retreat over the Orne, out of the mixed up crowd, was impossible. Should this, however, take place during the day, it would result in an immediate pursuit partly via Conflans, and bring about the driving of the French to the Belgian and Luxembourg frontiers, so desired by Moltke. Even if the pursuit were begun late, repeated rearguard actions would have taken place and there would have been no sense in taking the discouraged and shaken army on a retreat, resembling a flight, thus ruining it entirely, on the long detour to Chalons in order to join there MacMahon's remnants of troops, while 450,000 Germans would have appeared at that point by a shorter road almost simultaneously, to give a decisive battle. Such prospect was not consoling to Bazaine. It was better to take the left wing out of the threatening turning movement from Rezonville via Gravelotte to behind the Mance ravine and to execute from the front: Gravelotte—Doncourt, a face to the rear toward the Moselle. On the ridge east of the Mance and west of the ravine was an "impregnable position" where an attack could be awaited and repulsed without any fear. After this had been accomplished, it would be possible, after another face to the rear, to reach the Metz fortifications and enjoy the well deserved rest. The attempt to make the double facing at one time would have brought a complete dissolution of the army. A halt had to be made in the strong position and a battle fought. This was the least that could be demanded from an army

which had won, officially, a brilliant victory on the 16th. The short retreat was excused by the need of provisions and ammunition, and it was reported quite seriously that the ordered march to Chalons, would take place over the repulsed and annihilated enemy. Thus read the official intentions. As a matter of fact, the retreat to Metz was fully decided, if not earlier, at least in the evening of the 16th. This retreat must lead in any event to a complete downfall.

In 1757, more than one hundred years earlier, the Austrian Army under Prince Charles of Lorraine, after a bloody battle had been thrown back to Prague and invested. The information caused great terror in Vienna. After closer investigation of the circumstances, it was recognized that this investment was of greater advantage than a retreat bordering on flight. Prince Charles was instructed to undertake attempts at breaking through the enemy without, however, allowing them to succeed. Since there were sufficient provisions, Prince Charles was to stay in Prague and keep the greater part of the Prussian army in front of this fortress.

It was hoped that sufficient troops could be assembled against the rest. The battle of Kolin showed the correctness of this speculation.

The state of affairs in 1870 was somewhat different from that of 1757. The energy of a Maria Theresa was not felt in Paris, nor was there at the head of a relief army the wisely calculating Count Daun and, instead of the few Prussian battalions which bled to death at Kolin, there would still remain, after the investment of Metz, a German field army of 250,000 men. But, since a French army must be invested in a fortress, there arose therefrom conditions not very different from those of 1757, to take advantage of which there was no one to compete with Moltke.

The critique of the war was just in maintaining that it would have been best for Bazaine to beat with his 160,000 men the 450,000 of the German army. Since he, however, did not feel able to solve this problem and since he did not wish to be driven to the Belgian and Luxemburg frontiers or be received at Chalons as a completely defeated general

by the likewise totally beaten MacMahon, the retreat to Metz must be considered as a tolerable expedient.

But was it still possible to use this expedient? Was the French Army, which could not be entrusted with the retreat to Briey, capable of retreating to the impregnable position? Hardly, should the enemy advance on the following morning. A panic, a sudden flight, so thought Bazaine, might occur. Fortunately, the dreaded enemy did not move throughout the entire day of the 17th and thus time remained "to save the army."

Map 84.

One Guard Division and the II Corps marched past the 25th German Division through Gravelotte, the other division of the Guard and the III Corps via Malmaison, the IV via Verneville to the ridge the other side of the Mance. The VI Corps was to follow as a rearguard to Verneville. Since there was no adequate position to be found there, it was sent to the right wing. The entire movement was very difficult, the regiments had first to reform, then the brigades, and lastly, the divisions. The separate march columns had to cross each other in the most varied directions. Night had come long since when the last troops reached their objective, only 10 km. distant, but without being molested in any way by the enemy. On the following day there stood: the VI Corps on a ridge between Roncourt and hill 321, some 1000 m. south of St. Privat; the IV from hill 322 north of the railway to Montigny la Grange, the III joining on the left to the bend in the road east of St. Hubert; the II thence to Rozerieulles, Lapasset's Brigade at Jussy and Ste. Ruffine, the Guard Corps at Plappeville.

Bazaine had succeeded, not only in withdrawing his army from a very serious situation, but also in placing it in position whence he could give the enemy a very difficult problem to solve.

Map 81.

Moltke's first thought, upon receiving information of the events of the 16th, was renewed attack and pursuit. On both wings the nearby line of retreat, via Conflans to Verdun or via Gravelotte to Metz, must be reached and the defeated enemy driven to Briey or Diedenhofen. But these intentions were decidedly opposed by headquarters of the Second Army whose reckless enterprising spirit had evi-

dently suffered from the fatal frontal attack of the evening before. The difficult situation, the bad condition of the troops after a battle of twelve hours, was painted in the most vivid colors. The weak remnants of the III and X Corps would not dare to attack the vastly superior enemy. It would be serious enough should they be forced to defend themselves. Anything that might "entice" the enemy to an attack, should be avoided.

This could scarcely have been the view of General von Alvensleben. His aim on the 16th was to hold the enemy, whom he had attacked, until other troops came up to annihilate him. He was willing to undertake a retreat step by step, even to Verdun, should this be necessary. Even on the 17th, he would not have feared a retreat, since he knew that the Guard and XII Corps were advancing on one side and the VII, VIII, and IX Corps on the other for the purpose of transforming the pursuit into a decisive defeat.

Such reasons, however, were not considered. The fantastic ideas of the old Hotspur could not prevail against the objections of army headquarters and representations of experienced and sensible generals, like Goeben. Moltke must see that his plan would crumble if those who would have to execute it should refuse to support it and proposed to the King to delay the attack until the 18th.

At 1:45 PM, the following orders were issued: "The Second Army will start tomorrow the 18th, at 5:00 AM and advance, in echelons from the left wing between the Yron and Gorze brooks (in general between Ville sur Yron and Rezonville). The VIII Army Corps will join this movement on the left wing of the Second Army. The VII Corps will, in the beginning, secure the general movements of the Second Army against possible attacks from the direction of Metz."

The limits, set for the advance, Yron and Gorze brooks, had already been passed westward, since the left wing corps of the Second Army had been directed on Hannonville. It was found advisable to adopt this small widening of the space, much too small for the six corps, and to begin as early as the 17th, the echeloning of the troops to the left from the line: Gorze—Hannonville. Every general, intent

upon victory, takes advantage of the preceding day, of the night, the morning, to place himself in the most favorable position for battle. The Second Army, however, would not be in a favorable situation in regard to the enemy, should it remain at Gorze—Hannonville. It would not know there, for instance, whether the enemy had not started early on the 17th on a retreat with the IV Corps via Briey, and, should the cavalry bring information as to where he stood at noon, in the afternoon, or in the evening, it would still be too far off to take advantage of the situation on the 18th so as to drive the enemy toward the frontiers of Luxembourg and Belgium as desired by Moltke. It was, consequently, necessary to advance with the six corps to Conflans—Rezonville, on the 17th. Then the right wing could directly follow the enemy retreating via Briey, while the left would follow in a turning movement in the direction of Longuyon—Montmedy—Stenay.

Early on the 17th, the III and X Corps were hardly in a condition to attack. It was necessary first to restore order in the thinned units, bring up ammunition, and the horses for the batteries. But toward noon, when the retreat of the enemy could no longer be doubted, a short march might have been undertaken for the purpose of sparing the troops the view of the battlefield and to give the thirsty troops water, of which there was none on the plateau of Tronville and Vionville. It might also have been possible to give a farther objective to the corps then coming up. Indeed, all the efforts required of the troops today would benefit them tomorrow in battle. It was strictly within the limits of possibility for the troops to reach the following points on the 17th: the Guard Corps, Conflans via Hannonville; the XII, Jarny via Mars la Tour; the X, Bronville from Tronville; the III, St. Marcel from Vionville; the IX, Flavigny from Gorze; the VIII, Rezonville from east of Gorze; the VII, the northern edge of the Bois des Ognons and the Bois de Vaux via Ars; the 5th, 6th, and 12th Cavalry Divisions, past the Guard and the XII Corps, Briey and Auboué. It would then have been learned: the enemy had not crossed the Orne, but was standing in superior force behind the Mance ravine, east of Gravelotte. Should he attempt to

Map 82.

march to Briey in the morning, he could be found between the Gravelotte—Verneville—Ste. Marie—Auboue and Ste. Ruffine—Amanvillers—St. Privat, and Montois roads. Should he seek to march via St. Privat, Amanvillers, Chatel St. Germain, and Ste. Ruffine to Metz, he would have to pass between those roads with the entire army in his rearguards. The French Army would, consequently, if it had not already done so, occupy a position on the ridge between the Mance ravine and the Montveau ravine, whatever might have been its previous intentions. Its left wing would hold the heights at Point du Jour and Rozerieulles. How far the right extended was not known, because by evening of the 17th not all the troops had reached the posts assigned them and because the wings of a position are very variable quantities. Whoever did not know this from military history, could have learned it on the 16th. In the morning of that day the French right wing had been ascertained to be at Rezonville. In the afternoon, it was found to be at Mars la Tour, with the cavalry still farther west beyond the Yron brook. On the 18th the French right wing stood at Roncourt. In order to ascertain this, it would not have sufficed to find St. Privat and Roncourt occupied. It had likewise to be ascertained that Montois was not occupied and that no echelon had been left at Malancourt. Had the cavalry found all this out, a rather difficult task, the morning of the 18th, still it could not guarantee that these points would not be occupied during the day.

To be prepared for all eventualities, the Germans had to assume: that the entire French Army of 150,000 men is in position on the heights east of the Mance ravine from Ste. Ruffine to the Orne near Montois and has decided to oppose obstinate resistance. Should this be overrating the opponent, all the better for the attacker. According to this supposition and in conformity with Moltke's order, the Guard Corps would advance on the 18th from Conflans to Briey and Moyeuvre la Grande, the XII Corps from Jarny along the Orne via Auboue to Montois, the X from Bruville via Graumont to Ste. Marie, the III from St. Marcel via Doncourt, Jouaville, Batilly, St. Ail, and via Habonville to St. Privat, the IX via Calure and Verneville to Aman-

villers, the VIII via Malmaison and Gravelotte to Moscou and Point du Jour.

It would have been impossible for the army to march in a closer, narrower, deeper formation. Each corps had a frontal width of hardly 3 km. and still the total front of the army was so extended, and the left wing columns could, if necessary, advance still farther to the north, that the turning and surrounding of the enemy could easily be accomplished. This turning movement had to be completed by the Guard, the 5th, 6th, and 12th Cavalry Divisions which hurried forward to the left on both banks of the Orne ahead of the infantry, and by the 1st and 3d which were to cut off Metz, and, if necessary take under fire, the road to Verdun at Ste. Ruffine and Moulins.

Each corps, in advancing, had to march in one column. This formation had been forced upon them in the march from the Rhine to the Saar and from the Saar to the Moselle through lack of available roads. At the present moment, close to the enemy, it was necessary that not only each corps, but each division and brigade form separate columns which could march abreast of one another, even without roads, at greater or smaller intervals, over the terrain, so as to deploy into battle formation without loss of time when necessity arose. Since the enemy extended his right wing only as far as Roncourt, he could be overtaken on the right by two to three corps. These should have marched further; the X via Montois to Marengo, the XII via Bronvaux and Marengo, and the Guard to Semecourt, the cavalry to Woippy.

It was not probable that the enemy would defend the impregnable position up to the last man, should such a surrounding movement be developed. He would try to retreat via Saulny, Lorry, and Chatel St. Germain. This would be all the more difficult for him, should the attack of the German right wing, as well as that of the left, be violent.

Considerable marches were necessary for the execution of this plan. These might have been spared the troops if the First Army had crossed the Moselle below Metz, on the 15th, 16th, and 17th. They were greatly increased be-

cause the Second Army did not advance on the 17th beyond the line: Hannonville—Gorze. Neither was anything done on the 18th to compensate for the lost time by quickness of resolve and rapidity of movement. Five hours were necessary for the purpose of marching up, halting, advancing, breaking up and reaching Caulre with the IX Corps and Jarny with the XII. And the Guard Corps, marching around the XII, had not yet reached Doncourt, in compliance with an order of army headquarters.

A decision had to be made. Certainty of victory lay until then in a strong left wing by which the hostile right wing could be overlapped, no matter how extensive it might be. Army headquarters rendered this doubtful by placing the III and X Corps, as well as the cavalry divisions, according to the Napoleonic model, as reserves in rear of the center, thus barring them from all useful action, and the left wing, which, according to Moltke's plan, must bring about the decision, was thus shortened by as many corps. In order to preserve, if not the assurance, at least the probability of a victory the four corps—the VIII, IX, the Guard, and the XII—must fill up the space between the Metz—Verdun road and the Orne in the hope that the hostile right wing would not reach to that river. Since the march to Gravelotte and Malmaison fell to the share of the VIII Corps, the Second Army should have gone with the IX Corps from Caulre to Verneville and Anvillers, one Guard division from Doncourt via Jouaville and Habonville to St. Privat, the other via Batilly and Ste. Marie to Roncourt, the XII along the Orne via Coinville and Auboue to Montois and Malancourt. This march would have fulfilled Moltke's order of echeloning on the left and of the turn to be made by the right and would have forced the right French wing to retreat in two or three hours.

Deceived by whatsoever reports, observations or calculations, Moltke assumed the hostile right wing to be at Montigny la Grange, while Army headquarters thought it at la Folie. It was practically impossible to place an army of 150,000 men between Point du Jour and la Folie. Only a rearguard could be in this narrow space. In order to drive back the latter, the intended direction of march of the Second Army could be adhered to. Royal Headquarters

and army headquarters, however, did not deem it worth while to make the great turning movement to the right with the left wing toward the Orne for a simple rearguard. The VIII Corps was, consequently, instructed to attack the front of Point du Jour—la Folie, the IX and the Guard Corps to attack the right flank and to march, for that purpose, the former from Caulre, the latter from Doncourt, to Verneville. Assembled there at one point, without the possibility of deploying, they were probably expected to achieve decision in the rearguard combat by the "weight of their mass." The XII Corps was to follow to Ste. Marie. It took that direction with one division, but wisely remained with the other on the right bank of the Orne.

Map 84.

The commanding general of the IX Corps, von Manstein, had marched since crossing of the Rhine in rear of other troops and ever and anon had to occupy reserve positions. As late as the 16th, he had been pushed away by the First Army from the Moselle crossing assigned to him. Only by hearsay did he know anything of victories which others won far away. At last he was at the front, full of eagerness to take his part in combat and victory. But army headquarters had said that the enemy was withdrawing partly to Metz and partly to the northwest. No time was to be lost. When he arrived breathless after a rapid ride, on the height west of Verneville and espied through his glass the white tents of a French Camp at Montigny la Grange, he exclaimed with pleasure: "All are not yet gone; the road is not yet open for them; they are cooking." This was in fact the enemy retreating to Briey, so far as he was to be reached, if at all. Whatever was farther north had already escaped the attack unless the Guard and XII Corps had reached them in time. The IX Corps must attack, hold, and annihilate as quickly as possible the enemy who had fallen into its clutches. The two advance guard battalions of the 18th Division were left on the road to la Folie assigned them, the artillery of the division and of the corps was hastily sent to take up positions by batteries from right to left on the ridge sloping down from Amanvillers to Verneville, batteries, whose tired horses could not gallop and were rewarded with hard words. The enemy at

Montigny and south of that village did not long delay in opening fire. This might have been foreseen. But it came as a surprise that southwest of Amanvillers French batteries opened fire at a distance of 600 m. It did not help much to turn about the extreme left German batteries. "Assailed from the front, from the left, and from half rear not only by violent shell, shrapnel, and mitrailleuse fire, but by a murderous, rapid rifle fire, the artillery suffered enormous losses from the very start."

The two advance guard battalions, reinforced by three companies, were entirely occupied at Chantrenne by the right wing of the French III Corps and could give as little assistance to the hard pressed artillery as the six battalions at Verneville, still engaged in deploying, while three battalions placed in the eastern part of the Bois de la Cusse could not do much more. It seemed that only a slight pressure forward would suffice to crush the meager German forces by an all annihilating superiority. Still the commanding general wanted to hold out and continue the artillery combat as well as could be done until the Guard should appear on his left. Then the attack would take place exactly as army headquarters had ordered, except that the extended front would be attacked not only by the VIII Corps, but by the 18th Division also, the flank by the 25th Division, called up from a position in reserve in the Bois de la Cusse, and by the Guard Corps. It was, however, impossible to continue the artillery combat until the execution of these plans. A French skirmish line, concealed so far by a ridge, came forward. Four guns were lost. The rest of the Corps artillery was saved, in spite of losses in men and horses, through the sacrifice of one battalion. But since the French did not pursue their success and did not advance, practically nothing was changed in the general situation. The eleven advance guard companies at Chantrenne covered the right flank against the 1st Division (Montaudon) of the III Corps. West of Champenoix four batteries fought against seventeen French batteries at Montigny and Amanvillers. On the left the 25th Division and three battalions of the 18th served as an excellent bullet stop in the Bois de la Cusse. The Hessian

batteries stood north of the railway line firing against the artillery of the 1st Division (Cisse), the right wing division of the IV Corps. The heights in the center were held by a few companies. About half of the infantry was deployed in the first line, the rest posted partly in the Bois de la Cusse, partly at Verneville, in readiness to advance with the Guard for the decisive attack.

The latter, upon receiving information that the hostile right wing was not at la Folie, but north of Amanvillers, had marched to Habonville instead of Verneville. When the 1st Guard Division reached that point, its commander, General von Pape, found these reports confirmed, that the hostile front was not at Amanvillers, but reached beyond St. Privat to Ste. Marie. The most natural thing for the division would have been to prolong the front of the X Corps, to deploy between the Bois de la Cusse and St. Ail and then to attack the enemy between St. Privat and Ste. Marie with artillery. Had the 2d Guard Division then turned to the left and surrounded Ste. Marie from the west, the XII Corps could have marched not against that village, but against Coinville and Auboue, could have easily attacked the enemy's rear and thus decided the battle.

General von Pape, however, believed General von Alvensleben's assertion that the effect of the chassepot and the mitrailleuse had been materially underrated, that an attack against a French front was very difficult, and that it was necessary to maneuver. The general wished to follow this excellent advice most faithfully, turn Ste. Marie, keep marching via Montois and Malancourt and attack the French in rear.

He, therefore, led the division into the ravine, extending from north of Habonville to Auboue so as to turn later on toward Montois. The French would not have it so, however. They advanced with skirmish lines from south of St. Privat to St. Ail—Habonville. To cover this flank, General von Pape sent first, the divisional artillery, then the corps artillery between Habonville and St. Ail against St. Privat and his four advance guard battalions via St. Ail against the weakly occupied Ste. Marie.

The nine batteries of the Guard artillery were fully adequate to cope with the French artillery south of St.

Privat. In the beginning, with no support from the infantry, then with some two battalions of the latter, they could only with difficulty defend themselves against the hostile sharpshooters, protected by the furrows of a plowed field, but nevertheless they held them at a great distance and, after hours of cannonading, achieved only the advantage of making the enemy expend his already scanty supply of ammunition.

In the meanwhile, the 1st Guard Division should have continued its turning movement, at least until it could attack Ste. Marie from the west and northwest, while the advance guard attacked it from the south. Had this succeeded, the division would have stood ready for further attack on the right wing of the French position between Roncourt and St. Privat, while the 2d Guard Division, coming up, would have been ready to make an attack from St. Privat to the railroad north of Amanvillers. The entire hostile front between Roncourt and Montigny la Grange could have been attacked, and the XII Corps could have proceeded, unmolested with the decisive enveloping movement via Coinville and Auboue, Montois, and Malancourt.

This simple development, conforming to Moltke's order, was spoiled by army headquarters, which assigned the 3d Guard Infantry Brigade to the IX Corps and thus greatly weakened the attack against the front south of St. Privat; also by headquarters of the Guard Corps who halted the enveloping movement of the 1st Guard Division southwest of Ste. Marie, and by General v. Pape, who, for "political considerations," begged the 47th Brigade of Nehrhoff's 2d Saxon Division for support in the attack against Ste. Marie, although he had twelve battalions of his own. The attack undertaken from the south and the west, prepared by the Saxon batteries and two batteries of the Guard, succeeded in the first assault. But a timely deployment of the 1st Division of the Guard was prevented and the right wing of the XII Corps had gone too far south for the turning movement.

The French battalions, driven out of Ste. Marie, were reinforced by troops from the St. Privat—Roncourt line, but both were repulsed by the advance guard of the 1st

Division of the Guard (Fusiliers, Jagers) on the eastern front of Ste. Marie, by the 47th Brigade and a few Saxon batteries at the ravine sloping to Homecourt, and by the 45th Brigade in the woods east of Auboue, thus forcing them to retreat in the direction of the main position.

The 45th Brigade in the woods of Auboue formed thus the left wing, the 47th Brigade northwest of Ste. Marie, the right wing, of the XII Corps. Between these were assembled the Saxon batteries, two infantry brigades being still on the march. The infantry of the 1st Guard Division was in and around Ste. Marie, the 4th Brigade was assembled at St. Ail. The batteries of the Guard were in position between St. Ail and Habonville. They supposed that they had silenced the French batteries. In reality the latter had only ceased firing in order to keep their scarce ammunition for the decisive moment.

The deployment had shifted entirely. The Guard Corps did not stand any more before the front from Hill 321 (1 km. southwest of St. Privat) to Roncourt, the XII Corps could no longer envelop the hostile position, but three brigades of the Guard and the XII Corps assembled for attack against the strong front. The Crown Prince of Saxony saw for himself that his left wing (45th Brigade) was directed straight from the west against the seemingly strongly occupied Roncourt. He wanted to correct the mistake and sent orders to the 48th Brigade, coming up from Batilly, to advance via Auboue and Montois to Roncourt. This was of little avail. An army of 150,000 men, occupying a defensive position, would have sufficient reserves to repulse the attack of one brigade against one of his wings. Roncourt, moreover, fronted the flank attack which was to come from Montois. Not much was needed to bar the space between the village and the quarries of Jaumont. An effective flanking attack should have extended farther, at least via Malancourt, and required more troops than one brigade. As matters stood, the Guard Corps had to attack Hill 321—St. Privat, the XII Corps to make a frontal attack on the position between that point and Roncourt. The hand of a leader was needed to restore order to the deployment which had wandered from its way.

Frederick the Great, at the battle of Prague, which was very similar to this, withdrew the second line of the left wing, added to it Zieten with 50 squadrons, advanced against the enemy, enveloped his wings and won the battle. Napoleon would have made out of Ste. Marie an All Saint's point, would have assembled all available forces on right and left, and advanced with an all-encircling left wing. Moltke, had he been on the spot, would have had the Guard Corps deployed between the woods of Auboue and St. Ail, would have replaced the infantry lacking on the right and the artillery lacking on the left, by troops of the X Corps, and brought back the XII Corps to the roads of Montois and Malancourt, designated for it in the beginning. All three of these generals have conquered or wished to conquer by outflanking.

Second Army headquarters held to the end, the opinion that the enemy wanted to retreat via Briey. What had been seen of him at Amanvillers, St. Privat, and Roncourt were evidently echelons of the great retreating army, halting for a long rest in order to gather strength for the hurried march ahead of them. It would be sufficient to stop them in their march. It was scarcely necessary to drive them back to Metz in disorder and confusion, or to cut them off entirely from the fortress. Should the individual marching echelons want to remain at their halting points, a frontal attack would be sufficient to force them, in their weakness, to resume their march. Apprehension was caused only by the main forces, with which the IX Corps had apparently come in contact, as these were strong enough to attempt to break through. This was the point where the reserves should have been sent. The 3d Guard Infantry Brigade and the III Corps were ordered up for support or to serve as reserves. The X Corps was also to follow to the rendezvous of the great decision, but was held back. To these measures was limited the leadership of army headquarters, after the purpose of striking with a powerful attack in close order by two corps, the hostile flank at la Folie, had come to naught. What should be done on the left wing was left to the discretion of corps, division, even of brigade commanders, who, without agreement as to purpose and objective, would hinder rather than support each other.

The entire army would, consequently, be engaged in a frontal attack, the IX Corps having to await the Guard Corps and the latter the XII. Impatiently did von Manstein look for the Prince of Wurttemberg, and the latter for the Crown Prince of Saxony. The latter had reported that he would start at 5:00 PM to attack Roncourt. Half an hour had passed and nothing was to be seen of the Saxons at Montois. They would march under cover and take Roncourt before the Guard had started. It was high time to attack St. Privat. The French artillery, as reported by Prince Hohenlohe, was silenced. Infantry was thought to be seen moving from St. Privat to Amanvillers. It was evident that the weakly occupied St. Privat was being evacuated. If the Guard should not get busy to pluck the ripe fruit, the Saxons would do it and thus shame the Corps whose duty it was to undertake the most difficult problem. Permission was obtained from army headquarters to attack immediately. The 1st Guard Division was to advance north and the 2d south of the main road straight against St. Privat.

The latter (five battalions of the 4th Brigade) deployed at St. Ail and started immediately. The tactics of the French skirmishers was to keep out of the zone of the needle gun fire, to retreat if necessary, but to shower on the approaching German infantry rapid fire from the long range chassepots. The plan was somewhat spoiled by the artillery of the 1st Guard Division which directed its fire at least partly, against the hostile skirmishers when the latter were retreating. Nevertheless, the losses of the 4th Brigade, advancing in deep formation with two battalions in the first line for prolonged combat, were great enough. The simple men with narrow minds could not understand that they somehow served King and country by letting themselves be killed in the second or third line. It could surely not harm Germany if, before being stricken with a soldier's death of honor on the field, they should strike down a few of the hereditary enemies.

They did not want to die in vain and rushed forward to form a single long line of skirmishers. There was sufficient space between the highroad and the Bois de la Cusse and the chassepots took good care that it should not be

overcrowded. The two battalions of the artillery support joined on the right. North of the ravine, extending from St. Ail to St. Privat, advanced two battalions of Franz's Regiment (2d Grenadiers of the Guard) in the ravine and south of it came half a battalion of this regiment, the Konigin Regiment (4th Grenadiers of the Guard) and one battalion of the Alexander (1st Grenadiers of the Guard). It was the endeavor of Count Waldersee, Commander of the Konigin Regiment, to encircle the enemy in the principal position on the ridge between St. Privat and Hill 321, from the right. The attack succeeded with the aid of the artillery. Hill 321 was won by an assault according to regulations. The greatly superior enemy retired partly to St. Privat, partly in an easterly direction.

Soon, however, things were stirring everywhere. From the southeast another enemy approached for a counterattack. General Cissey (1st Division of the IV Corps) had left only his foremost line opposite the 25th Division and advanced with the remaining troops against Hill 321. These masses could not be withstood by the thin line of skirmishers, exhausted by the combat for the occupied position. Captain von Prittwitz climbed with his battery up the steep slope into the line of skirmishers and, though only three guns could fire at 600 meters a few well aimed shots sufficed to bring the advancing columns to a halt. The guns which had remained behind and the other batteries of the 1st Guard Division hurried up and their fire succeeded in forcing the reserves and Cissey's Division to retreat, the former to Marengo, the latter to Hill 322. The batteries and the Alexander Battalion covered the right flank from then on. The greater part of the Konigin regiment turned to St. Privat and drove the enemy from Hill 328 with the aid of the Franz half battalion. It was impossible for the weak forces to take St. Privat from the south. They surrounded in a semicircle the southwest slope and Hill 328.

The two and one half battalions of the Franz Regiment, forming the left wing of the 4th Guard Brigade, advanced straight on St. Privat and came into the hottest fire from the village which was enveloped in a white cloud of powder smoke. They sought refuge in the deep ditches and behind the trees of the highroad. There they massed in great

Map 86.

Map 85.

depth. Only part of them formed a line facing southeast. This much, however, was attained: the enemy retreated behind the walls of St. Privat where he could not be reached by the infantry.

General von Pape had objected to the use of the 1st Division of the Guard north of the highroad. The division had no artillery, no shot had as yet fallen on St. Privat, and it was impossible to defeat the enemy with the short range needle gun. Colonel von der Becke, who was accidentally there, proposed to bring the artillery of the X Corps up in twenty minutes. He was told that there was no more time for this and that artillery was hardly necessary, as the artillery of the Guard Corps had silenced an hour ago the hostile guns and the enemy was already evacuating the position. General von Pape was directed by the Prince of Wurtemberg to hurry the attack. "He is always so slow." General von Dannenberg, chief of staff, gave him as objective the highest houses of St. Privat: exactly like the point of direction shown in brigade maneuvers—the church tower of Templehof or Britz. But here it was no brigade maneuvering, but an attack of the position: St. Privat—Roncourt, which must be attacked along its entire extent, if it were not desired to await the XII Corps. Should only the point of the left wing be attacked, the hostile right wing would turn left and sweep the attacking column with flanking fire, or, at least, with oblique fire, while there would be a sufficient frontal fire to boot.

In order to start the ordered attack, it would have been simplest to advance with the advance guard as right wing from Ste. Marie along the highroad, with the 4th and 2d Guard Regiments, standing in and west of the village, and march to the left with the 1st Brigade of the infantry of the Guard, standing southwest of this point, letting a part of it follow in echelons, should this be necessary. Artillery (the corps artillery of the X Corps, that of the 2d Guard Division and 47th Brigade) could still be had, not only to fire on St. Privat but also on the line of skirmishers and to help the infantry to cross the entire space in which it would be exposed to the chassepots without being able to use the needle gun. General von Pape cared to hear nothing about such a deployment. The advance guard had been

designated to hold Ste. Marie in any case, the 4th and 2d Brigades were to serve as reserves. There remained, consequently, only the 1st Brigade to cross the highroad on the shortest line and to advance quite simply against the tallest houses of St. Privat.

It had stood under cover in the ravine of Homecourt, but was taken out and sent, so that everything should be prettily put together, to the heights into the long range fire of the chassepots and guns. The men lay flat on the ground, and suffered great losses. Like salvation from an insufferable situation, after two hours of standing still, came the orders to rise, advance, and turn to the right. For an enduring attack there advanced from the depths: one thin line of skirmishers, four company columns, two half battalions, four half battalions of the second, two battalions of the third line. As soon as the eastern end of Ste. Marie had been reached, the deep ditches along the highroad were crossed facing halfway to the left, even entirely to the left and, in order not to get in rear of the 4th Brigade, some more marching was done after which they turned in battalions and companies to the right. It was soon evident that the tallest houses of St. Privat did not suffice as objectives of attack. The brigade was forced to deploy against the long line of white smoke, extending from St. Privat to Roncourt.

The losses which were comparatively small during the two hours' halt, increased as soon as the brigade started on the march and reached an awful number at the crossing of the highroad, hardly decreasing during the flank march. A monstrous cloud of dust surrounded the dense column into which a ceaseless rapid fire was poured from the right, shells smashing into it, while small white puffs hurled their contents on the parading soldiers of the Potsdam pleasaunce, marching undisturbed by the terrors hurled at them in unchanging cadence "right, left, right, left." Were it only possible to save enough out of this fire to be able to start the combat with the needle gun. General von Kessel, the Brigade Commander called continuously "Forward, forward"; and "forward!" beat the drums; "forward" sounded the bugles, and forward went the Gren-

diers. It was most fatal that the continual falling of the men required repeated halts, and closing up of the column. At last the enemy was within rifle range. Fire can be opened, the advance rushes can proceed.

Map 86. Only one half, one third, one fourth of the effective strength had reached that point. The 2d Guard Regiment had advanced to the most dangerous zone, into the space between the highroad and the right wing of the 1st Brigade. The 4th Regiment of the Guard was to prolong the left wing. One battalion of the Alexander Regiment, the Konigin and Franz Regiments, the 2d, 3d, 1st, and 4th Guard Regiments formed something like a swarm of skirmishers, reaching from the left wing of the 25th Division as far as Roncourt. This village also was taken by the extreme left wing (two companies of the 1st Guard Regiment, 1st Company of the Guard Pioneers, and later one half-battalion of the 3d Guard Regiment). The entire line from hill 321 to Roncourt was in the hands of the Guard. The troops were not formed entirely according to rule, they were very much mixed up among each other. There were great gaps here and there. Only a few reserves and echelons were in rear.

The enemy was already shaken by the battle of the 16th and lost confidence in himself and in his leaders. The cleverly elaborated plan to annihilate the enemy by ceaseless rapid fire before he could approach sufficiently to make use of his inferior weapon, had failed. Needle gun and chassepot were now of equal power, the former was even superior in the hands of experienced men. This enemy could not be opposed for any length of time. The artillery had scarcely any ammunition left. The infantry likewise began to feel the consequences of ceaseless rapid fire. One man after the other had exhausted his supply of cartridges and left the trenches. Marshal Canrobert did not think it possible to hold the position long under the circumstances: the report that new masses were advancing from Montois and the woods of Auboue, accelerated his decision. Retreat was ordered. St. Privat alone, with a prolongation to the right along the road to Chateau Jaumont, was to be held by a strong rearguard. Two battalions and a cavalry

brigade, left first near Roncourt, retreated after the loss of this village, into the woods of Jaumont.

The infantry of the Guard advanced against St. Privat. Man-high stone walls, houses in rear of these with barred windows, embrasures and dormer windows, knee-high walls between gardens and fields in front of these and trenches in all the gaps, formed an impregnable fortress. The attack was brought to a halt a few hundred meters in front of it and was transformed into a fire fight between the covered and uncovered sharpshooters. But St. Privat would be invested as soon as the two German wings should advance. But the Guard was no longer able to do it after the terrible losses suffered. However, large reinforcements were coming up. The XII Corps advanced from the left from Auboue, on the right stood the IX Corps at St. Ail. By the retreat of the one enemy to St. Privat and Marengo and of the other to Hill 322 a great gap was formed near the railway line in the French order of battle. The X Corps could penetrate here, break through, driving one enemy to the north toward the XII Corps and the other to the south. Unfortunately, the X Corps had been designated only as reserve, and as such was not to be used for the purpose of converting a doubtful victory into success, but to be kept untouched and unscathed by all the dangers and vicissitudes of battle! Thus all hope had to be placed on the XII Corps.

It had supported in the beginning with a few shots the advance of the 1st Guard Infantry Brigade. After this the 47th Brigade advanced into the woods of Auboue in rear of the 45th, and the 46th in rear of the 47th. The 48th advanced but slowly over the dusty limestone highroad from Auboue and Montois. In rear of this village deployed this brigade, joined the likewise deployed 45th Brigade and fired against Roncourt which was already occupied by the Guard.

Map 85.

Map 86.

An orderly officer of General von Pape's staff rode to the XII Corps to request the support of the batteries of the 1st Guard Brigade. Through his initiative, he had five and one half battalions of the leading brigades diverted to St. Privat. The rest continued the march to Roncourt. But the rear brigades and the mass of the artillery also

gradually took the former direction. According to an ancient rule, detachments, designated for independent, but easy, flank attack, return, wherever possible, to dependence and to the difficulties of a frontal attack in mass. This was the case here. The greater part of the XII Corps crowded together with the Guard before the strong front of St. Privat. The much smaller part turned to Roncourt for a flanking attack, relieving the Guard which was garrisoning it, and saw itself, to its great surprise, opposed not only by an enemy who had advanced north of the St. Privat—Jaumont road, but also threatened on its left flank from the woods and quarries of Jaumont. Instead of outflanking, it was itself outflanked and was too weak to withstand this flank attack alone.

From the highroad to the wood of Jaumont two fronts faced each other. On the right was one French flank, curved forward, on the left, the other was curved backward, holding the southern part of St. Privat. Against the latter, the few companies of the Konigin and Franz Regiments could do nothing.

St. Privat had been bombarded for some time by the artillery of the Guard and XII Corps. Fire had broken out at several points. The situation of the 14 massed battalions was growing intolerable. Many troops left the village. It would not be possible to hold out much longer and, should the enemy come up from right and left, the garrison would be lost. Canrobert ordered the gradual retreat beginning from the south and the west front. The flames, breaking over St. Privat, seemed like a torch lighting the storm. The companies of the Konigin and Franz Regiments first followed the beacon and charged the more weakly defended south side of the village. The battalions of the Franz Regiment stationed on the highroad, would not stay behind but rushed up from the west and sent detachments up the exit leading toward Marengo. The southern part of the village fell into the hands of the Germans. The northern part, cut off from the highroad, could no longer be held alone. General von Pape had the signal for rapid advance given. From the heaps of corpses arose the few whom the bullets had spared. All, Prussians and Saxons, stormed forward. The western front was taken

almost at the first onrush. The combat, however, lasted long against the high walls, the strong houses, the cemetery on the northwest corner and on the northern front. Many an attack was repulsed. The batteries, in their laudable effort to help, hit as many of the attackers as of the defenders. Only when the last, obstinately defended houses had been surrounded on all sides, did the desperate defenders cease fighting. Numerous captives were taken. But under cover of these fights, the VI Corps succeeded in retreating almost unscathed and unmolested.

The moment seemed ripe to send in the reserves. The 20th Division had started from St. Ail. Ignorant of the condition of affairs, it wanted to advance in a northeasterly direction in order to deliver via Roncourt the decisive blow against flank and rear. But events changed the course of the division toward St. Privat. One brigade was sent through the village, and took over the outposts which had been thrown forward on the heights of Marengo against the retreated enemy. In the meanwhile the entire artillery had come up; the Hessian batteries on the right of the Bois de la Cusse, north of the railway. They were joined by all the Guard batteries with a few of the X Corps in the "impregnable" position south of St. Privat. North of the village followed a few Prussian and all the Saxon batteries as far as the quarries of Jaumont. This was a monstrous artillery line which naught could have resisted had it been formed earlier. Now it did scarcely any harm to the enemy, and only damaged its own advanced infantry while it was most effectively answered by the French army reserve batteries, located in the quarries of Jaumont, which had found a convenient mark in the burning and illuminating St. Privat.

Almost 250 guns firing in one line form an imposing spectacle and finale for an attack which, executed by three army corps against front and flanks, should have been crushing and annihilating, but which, undertaken by two brigades (one of which had no artillery whatever) straight against the front of the strongest point of the very strong position, gave no results, in spite of all subsequent reinforcements, further than to accelerate by a few hours the retreat which the enemy had already decided upon. Such

a success seems to have been bought too dearly with the enormous losses, the average of which, for each of the five regiments of the Guard engaged in the combat, amounted to 35 officers and 1000 men. The incomparable courage of the troops which, notwithstanding all the mistakes and failures of the leaders and the superiority of the enemy in numbers and arms, reached their objective, won such a victory that it placed the German army for a long time at the head of all European hosts. This was the principal success of St. Privat. The other which forced not only the VI Corps, but the entire French Army to withdraw from its "impregnable" position, is not to be so highly esteemed.

Map 85. The situation of the IX Corps at 5:00 PM, though reinforced by the corps artillery of the III Corps, remained almost unchanged. On the right wing at Chantrenne, four to five battalions with four batteries, repulsed the turning attempts of Montaudon's Division (1st of the III Corps). Ten batteries with some infantry held the heights in the center against Grenier's and Lorencez's Divisions (2d and 3d of the IV Corps). On the left wing the 25th Division in the Bois de la Cusse was assembled for the purpose of attacking Cisse's Division (1st of the IV Corps) as soon as the Guard Corps had started. As a result of the many hours of artillery fire, the 25th Division had suffered greatly. Nevertheless the IX Corps had nothing to fear from an enemy who had never utilized any occasion for a worthy offensive. General von Manstein requested reinforcements. These were sent to him in the form of the 3d Guard Brigade, but at the same time the cover of his left flank was thus considerably weakened. There remained only the 4th Guard Brigade for the attack of the strong position on the heights south of St. Privat. Should it be repulsed by the one and one half divisions of the defense, and should the latter, in conjunction with Cisse's Division make a counter-attack, the left flank of the IX Corps would be threatened to the utmost. It would have been advisable to leave the 3d Guard Brigade on the left wing. As later events showed, it, in conjunction with the 25th Division, would probably have defeated Cisse's Division and rolled up the IV Corps. However, such artificial methods were not in keeping with

Map 86.

the ideas of the brave General von Manstein. He preferred an orderly, powerful frontal attack, regardless of whether the enemy or his position be strong or weak, to all other tactical operations, and thus the 25th Division, with the addition of six batteries, was sent to attack Cisse's Division (1st of the IV Corps); the 3d Brigade, but without the cumbrous artillery impediment was sent to attack the two Divisions of Grenier and Lorencez in their very strong position, well reinforced by trenches, west of Amanvillers. The attack did not take place in a line already deployed, but the deployment was made during the combat. The Guard Rifle battalion, at the head of the troops, lost all its officers and more than half of the rank and file and was led during the last phase of the combat by a luckily spared ensign. The losses of the other battalions, two of the Alexander Regiment (1st Grenadiers of the Guard) and three of the Elizabeth Regiment (3d Grenadiers of the Guard) were, though considerable, somewhat less, and each turned to the right and entered the zone of rapid fire of the chassepots. The six battalions held their own, in spite of all their losses against the hostile firing line. When they renewed the advance after nightfall, they had the satisfaction of finding the position evacuated. It had become untenable after the VI Corps had started to retreat and the right flank of the IV was threatened.

Map 87.

The First Army fought its battle only in loose touch with the Second. It was instructed to attack the front of the enemy between la Folie and Point du Jour with the VIII Corps, and with the VII his left flank between Point du Jour and Ste. Ruffine. The latter task was facilitated by the heights southwest of the stone quarries of Point du Jour, but was rendered more difficult by the wood of Vaux situated in front of the flank that was to be attacked. Only a few narrow and steep paths led up the hills and through the dense thickets of the wood. Infantry could go along these paths only in single file, the artillery not at all.

Map 84.

If the army headquarters had remembered the battle of Jena, the manner in which the Landgrafenberg had been rendered accessible and Napoleon who, torch in hand, led the work himself, it might have rendered the impossible

possible. There was sufficient time even to exceed the Napoleonic feats. Had it been possible to thus bring the batteries through the wood to the height and to execute, with their help, the attack ordered against the flank simultaneously with the attack against the front, the combat on this wing would soon have come to an end. But army headquarters kept away from such venturesome enterprises. Since the attack against the hostile left flank presented too many difficulties, the action was limited to the defense which had been recommended by Moltke only for the beginning. Six battalions, one squadron, and one battery were left at Ars to protect the German communications against an advance of the French in the valley of the Moselle, while five and one half battalions were sent to the edge of the Bois de Vaux. The rest of the VII Corps remained on the right bank of the Mance south of Gravelotte. It could co-operate from that point in the frontal attack which the VIII Corps was to undertake from Gravelotte—Malmaison through the deep ravine, the woods of the Mance and Genivaux up the slope against the French position at Point du Jour—Leipsig.

To meet such an attack, the 1st Division (Verge) of the II Corps had strongly occupied an almost uninterrupted trench along the main road extending from the southern bend southeast of the quarries of Point du Jour to a point east of St. Hubert. In rear of these stood the 2d Division (Bastoul) of the same corps, and on the right joined the Divisions of Aymard (4th), Metmann (3d), and Nayral (2d) of the III Corps extending as far as Leipzig. Beyond the position infantry had been posted in the woods on either side of the main road and as far as St. Hubert. There was plenty of cover, a clear field of fire, and plenty of infantry, and there would have been no lack of artillery if the principle of maintaining strong reserves of this arm had been disregarded. It was thus quite easy for the artillery of the VII Corps south, and the VIII Corps north of Gravelotte to silence the French batteries and force them to withdraw. The combat was to be limited to an artillery duel, such were the orders from Royal Headquarters, until the IX Corps could make itself felt farther to the

north. But since the French skirmishers had approached under cover and troubled the batteries with their fire, the attack had to be executed willy nilly. One, two, three battalions were sent to advance on the main road first and along side of it later. Reinforcements fed the combat and slowly extended its front. It was thus possible to penetrate, after a hot combat, into the Mance wood, to reach the eastern edge after heavy losses and to hold out there as far as the quarries of Point du Jour on the right, and 100 meters from the main road on the left. After a bloody combat, St. Hubert, situated immediately in front of the hostile position, was finally taken.

The brigade commander commanding the right wing thought that after "turning" from the Bois de Vaux, the height would be taken. Such ideas seemed absurd to General von Steinmetz. According to his opinion not only had the artillery been silenced and St. Hubert taken, but all of the enemy had been defeated and forced to retreat. All that was left was the pursuit. In order to solve this problem, one infantry brigade, the artillery of the VII Corps, and the 1st Cavalry Division, halted south of Malmaison, should advance via Gravelotte and the Mance ravine and drive the enemy into the Chatel St. Germain ravine. Only four batteries succeeded in threading their way through the turmoil on the main road as far as the far side of the ravine. Two of these did not succeed in unlimbering and fled. Only the batteries of Hasse and Gnugge opened fire and kept it up even against the newly appearing mitrailleuses. Hasse's Horse Battery however, suffered enormous losses. Only one gun remained in the end, for whose service the battery commander and the only surviving officer had to combine. When the ammunition boxes of the limbers had been emptied, the battery received orders from Gravelotte to return. Impossible! All the horses lay on the ground. New teams were brought up by the battalion commander, and the guns and limbers, with the wounded on the chests, were led back at a walk through the ravine. Gnugge's battery, covered by the garden walls of St. Hubert, was able to hold out a little longer.

Map 85.

Of the cavalry division, only the 4th Uhlán Regiment which was in the lead, succeeded in reaching the far side of

the ravine and in deploying south of the road. An attack against the fire-spouting entrenchments was out of the question. After appropriate losses had been suffered in a slightly covered position, the retreat was started along a steep path through the wood, and partly in the evening, and partly in the night, it rejoined the division at Mogador. The infantry brigade did not deploy according to regulations. The individual companies, detachments, even groups hurried to where they hoped to find room in the foremost line, stormed independently against the hostile firing line, were repulsed, but still advanced quite a bit beyond the edge of the wood and threw themselves down, mixed up among each other, at 300—400 meters in front of the hostile entrenchments. Thereupon commenced a lull in the combat.

How should the battle be renewed and continued? One brigade of the VIII Corps stood as yet in reserve in rear of Gravelotte. One regiment of the latter had to be used as a covering detachment against the French III Corps, which threatened the left flank of the VIII Corps from the Bois de Genivaux, as well as the right flank of the IX. General Goeben advanced with the last regiment close to St. Hubert. It could not be expected that this would bring a turn in the situation. Some help might come only from the flank. General von der Goltz was on the extreme right wing with the 26th Brigade, had advanced from Ars and taken Jussy, but could go no further against the strong position: Ste. Ruffine—Rozerieulles, although one brigade of the I Corps had sent out its skirmishers on the right bank of the Moselle as far as the red house opposite Moulins. Although both brigades had come quite close to the road of retreat to Metz, still they had no effect upon the events at Moscou and Point du Jour. In order to make an end here, General von Steinmetz found nothing else to do but to send in the II Corps which at 2:00 AM had left Pont-a-Mousson and at 5:00 PM reached with the 3d Division, Rezonville.

Before this corps could start, a French counterattack was made. Batteries, taken from the reserve, initiated it, then came the infantry. The advanced German detachments were driven back, but the attack was soon checked by the fire directed from the edge of the woods and from the

walls of St. Hubert. However, a panic ensued, in rear of the German front, among all the units and the rank and file who, without leaders, suddenly heard the noise of combat. The frightened mass fled in confused crowds, to Gravelotte. Hardly had they reached the protecting point and the French their trenches, when the 3d Division started and worked its way through the seething mass of men, horses, and vehicles. The advance guard (2d Jagers and the 24th Regiment) upon reaching the height, penetrated somewhat beyond the former line and advanced by small detachments to the center close to the bend of the highroad east of St. Hubert, and on the right as far as quarries of Point du Jour 150 meters from the hostile entrenchments. To the left, towards Moscou, the walls of St. Hubert were crossed but not very far. Behind and into this line crowded the main body of the 3d Division. Soon dissolved into its constituent units, it mixed up with the detachments of the VIII Corps. In the meanwhile, darkness had come. The positions of the enemy could be distinguished only by the burning buildings of Moscou and Point du Jour. The French likewise could not see their opponents, only hear them. As soon as a movement was audible on the part of the Germans, the fire of the defense flared up again, and was answered, not only by the leading troops of the attack, but also, to their serious prejudice, by their own rearmost detachments.

Map 87.

For the purpose of bringing some order into chaos, the troops of the VIII Corps were sent back to Gravelotte and, since this did not eliminate the confusion, it was deemed well to relieve the 3d Division by the 4th. The fire, caused by this movement, was silenced only after considerable time. Battle outposts could be placed, the line of which extended from Jussy to the northern edge of the Bois de Vaux and the southwest corner of the quarries, thence for some distance along the highroad, turning north of St. Hubert around the southern part of the Bois des Genivaux. Since no reports had come in concerning the result of the battle of the Second Army, considerable apprehension was felt at Royal Headquarters in regard to the situation of the First Army. The general opinion was that it would be

Map 88.

necessary to await the supposed attack of the enemy on the 19th in a strong position near Gravelotte. Moltke, however, succeeded in persuading the King that it was necessary to resume the attack should a battle be found necessary. He had foreseen correctly.

A similar process to that of the Germans took place on the French side. As the VIII Corps and the 3d Division had returned to Gravelotte, so had the men, defending the trenches at Point du Jour and Moscou, left their posts first one by one, then in groups and later in detachments. They were replaced by new troops who, like the 4th Division opposite them, awaited the renewal of the combat. They did not have long to wait.

Bazaine had already returned to his quarters, when one of Canrobert's aids reported the retreat of the VI Corps. He consoled the despairing bringer of bad tidings by saying that the retreat of his chief had accelerated the general retreat only by twelve hours. The orders, elaborated and prepared in the morning by the General Staff, were immediately issued. They were for the purpose of taking the army to the "second position," the II Corps to Longeville between St. Quentin and the Moselle, the III to Scy, Lessy, and Lorry, the IV to Plappeville and le Sansonnet, the VI thence to Fort Moselle, the Guard, the cavalry, and the artillery reserve to the narrow space within the surrounding corps. The road to Metz was open. On the other side only the I Corps barred the road to freedom. To push this obstacle aside would not have been difficult, according to von Goeben's opinion. However, having all the German armies, including the Third, in the rear, this breaking through to freedom would have ended in being surrounded on the Rhine at the latest.

The retreat was begun in the night with the II and the III Corps. When day dawned, only weak detachments remained behind. Short fire fights took place between these and the Germans at Point du Jour and the quarries.

Through one of the bloodiest battles the only result was that a retreat which had been already decided upon, had been advanced by twelve hours. That it would have been started sooner or later was due to the conviction of Bazaine, his generals, and his army, that it was impossible to oppose perma-

ment resistance to the "brutal offensive" of the enemy even in an "impregnable position."

The generation of 1870 lived on Napoleonic traditions. But what had been borrowed from the treasure trove of the Great War Lord's campaigns was not taken from the period of his great victories of Marengo to Friedland, but from the period subsequent to the Russian defeat. It was left unheeded that Ulm had been won by a tremendous turning movement, Jena—by wide encircling wings, Austerlitz and Friedland by attacks against one flank and Marengo by attacks on both. Imagination was excited by the gigantic attack of Leipzig on October 16th, against the center of the enemy and by the repeated attempts at Waterloo to pierce the English front. It was forgotten, through their very magnitude, that these attacks had miscarried and brought about the tragic end of the Corsican hero. Since that time an incontrovertible condition of victory was the massing of the troops before battle. Marches to be executed in deep, dense columns, the army assembled in narrow, deep masses.

What was done in this manner in 1870 is wonderful and won at the time the admiring recognition of Goeben. Eight corps of the First and Second Armies, a quarter of a million soldiers, marched on a narrow front to the Saar. It seemed that everything, coming in the way of this gigantic phalanx, would be ground to pieces under its thundering tread.

A French corps remained nevertheless on the heights of the left bank. In order to punish this temerity, the advance guard attacked. The position was too strong, the hostile rapid fire too murderous to allow the attack to succeed. Reinforcements had to be brought up. But only particles could be taken from the narrow front, led one after the other to the frontal attack, which could change nothing in the difficulties of the problem. One commanding general after the other took command, but each stood helpless before the problem. Late in the evening, there appeared, brought more by accident than by intention, one division in the flank and rear of the enemy and showed, unwittingly, to the assembled generals how strong positions have been taken since the times of Leonidas. Whoever wanted to see could see: formation

of masses brings about frontal attacks with inadequate forces, brings consecutive, ever weakening, combats having almost entirely no effect.

A pursuit should have been made after the victory of Spichern. But four entire days were necessary to unravel ever so little the gigantic tangle and bring the two armies across the Saar. In the meanwhile, the defeated and scattered enemy had had time to assemble and to escape their opponent in an orderly retreat. The excess of massing was somewhat mitigated in further advance marches, but the system of narrow front, deep formations and corps following corps was maintained. To this system is due, to a large degree the monstrosity of sending, on 16 August, one single corps out of sixteen against the hostile army and on the 18th from an army of five corps, of despatching only three brigades against an impregnable position.

Such mode of warfare Moltke had opposed since 1866. He showed that compressed masses, from whom victory is being expected, can neither be quartered nor fed and, what is still worse, not even moved. He calculated the length of a division and a corps in marching column and found that the latter would need almost an entire day to reach the battlefield and deploy, that it could be sent into attack only gradually, never in its entire strength, and that it would be impossible to ever count for that day on a corps which was following another. He therefore exacted for each corps at least one road.

The corps should not follow each other over one road, but over several, over at least as many parallel roads as there are corps. The interval between the roads depends on the conformation of the network of roads, which in cultivated lands averages from 7 to 8 km. A corps, in its present day constitution, organization, and equipment, with ammunition, can be deployed to a width of front of 6 km., and can develop fire power which would be vain to try to surpass.

For rapid deployment, according to Moltke's opinion, the march columns were still too long and at the present day, having been considerably increased, they would be still longer. It is impossible to shorten them on a long advance.

But, on nearing the enemy, they must be divided, by divisions and brigades, into two and, whenever practicable, into four columns which can use neighboring roads or, where such cannot be found, go across the country.

Moltke wanted to open the campaign of 1870 with just such an army of six corps, cross the Saar with seven columns on a front of 50 km., between Merzig and Saargemund, seek the enemy, who was considered to be weaker, and defeat him. When it was found that the French army could assemble in Lorraine in greater strength and in a shorter time than supposed, Moltke awaited the completion of the advance before advancing with eight or ten corps to secure superiority of numbers and to surround the hostile army by the extension of the army's front. The victory he wished to win, to be annihilating, could be gained not by an attack against the front alone, but in conjunction with attacks against both flanks, as at Koniggratz. These flanking attacks are rendered more easy if the enemy forms into narrow, deep massed units for a long combat. In the end, the wider front will win, since it makes possible the outflanking of the enemy and has supposedly, the greater and more numerous army.

The first problem of the general is to obtain a greater army. It was easy for the Great Napoleon to solve it since, as the most powerful sovereign of his time, it was not difficult to form a large army. If superiority in numbers was lost to him at the end of a long campaign, he paused, as after Prussian-Eylau or Aspern, brought his forces to the normal, and continued the war against the befooled enemy. Moltke did not have such rich resources at his command, but he held together the forces at his disposition and gained his point, in spite of all advice to the contrary, that observation armies should be posted neither on the Rhine in 1866 nor in 1870 in Silesia and that the war should be limited to the actual opponent and not to possible ones. This was in itself a feat greatly contributing to bring about the decision. For Bazaine would scarcely have retired on 16 August, had he not hourly expected the attack of a larger and stronger army. It is comparatively easy to attack the enemy in front and flank with a stronger and larger army. However, all efforts to assemble this great army and bring it to the theater

of war, may fail. Then the general will find himself facing a stronger opponent and must, such is the simple advice, see that he be the stronger at the decisive point.

Napoleon declared, when he found himself in the minority in the autumn of 1813, that the weakest and decisive point was the front, and assembled against it his not inconsiderable forces. An heroic, a superhuman attack, an annihilating piercing should be executed. The future depended on it, it had to decide if "the world was to be once more turned upside down." The monstrous attack broke as so many of those preceding it had done. And then the inevitable occurred. The man, who did not wish to surround, was surrounded on both sides, pressed together, encircled and would have been annihilated if pale fear had not left a back door open to the terror inspiring one. This much is sure—he be the stronger or the weaker—he who does not want to turn both flanks, will or can be turned on both flanks, and he who limits himself to attacking one flank only exposes himself to the danger of being attacked on the other.⁽³⁵⁾ Hannibal, consequently, did not reinforce the front at Cannæ, but brought its strength down to one third of that of the enemy. This caused the weak front to be driven back by the great pressure of the hostile mass. So much the easier was it for the outflanking Carthaginian wings to advance, to turn the opposing Roman Flanks and to soon stop both retreat and pursuit.

Frederick the Great saw himself facing strong oppositions and wide fronts with his small army. An attack of the latter would have brought defeat more quickly and surely to him than to Napoleon. He turned the positions to advance against a flank or even the rear of an enemy. The latter endeavored to direct his forces to the threatened point. The King saw himself facing a new position, after the execution of the turning movement, the front of which was too wide at Kolin, too strong at Kunersdorf, and whose flanks at both points were invulnerable. At Leuthen, the movement brought him likewise before a new front which,

⁽³⁵⁾ A hostile flank may be securely protected and be unassailable. Measures to ward off the danger of being attacked by it, must nevertheless be taken by the aggressor.

however, was so narrow and so deep, that it could be turned from both sides, though not without great difficulty. At Zorndorf, the Russians, threatened in the rear, had simply faced about and opposed the attack with as strong a front as before. It was due to the cavalry that first the front, then the one and then the other flank was attacked and the obstinate enemy could be driven back after a difficult and lengthy struggle. More decisive was the battle of Prague, where the victory was principally due to the extreme thinning of the left half of the battle line for the purpose of rendering the turning movement possible.

The example of Leuthen and Zorndorf is difficult to follow by an army counting millions of men. Not everyone can rise on a foggy December morning and turn a hostile flank with some twenty corps. But the weaker may hold to a Cannae or Prague if he will refute Napoleon's phrase "the stronger conquers" and annihilate the enemy in spite of it.

Today also, as at Cannae, can the center, with a few reinforcements—though with a large number of cartridges—be reduced and still attack as the 4th Guard had done on 18 August, with success, even today can the flanks, as at Prague, extend for an annihilating embrace and still it is possible to hope that the enemy, like Terentius Varro at Cannae, Napoleon at Leipzig, Benedek at Koniggratz, will assemble more or less in mass.

However, it should not be forgotten that the enemy will take countermeasures against such turning movements and flank attacks. Hence a modern battle will be more than ever a struggle for the flanks. At Koniggratz, the two corps of the Austrian right wing wanted to attack the left wing of the Prussian army. They encountered the resistance of Fransecky's Division. Before the latter had been vanquished, the Prussian Second Army threatened their own right flank. They went back to cover the flank of their army. This defensive flank was driven back by the 1st Guard Division which, in its turn was forced to retreat before the surrounding movement of the Austrian reserve until it was received by the advance guard of the I Corps and could put up resistance at the front, while the VI Corps turned against

the right flank of the advancing Austrians. The First Army then took a hand in the retreat combats, turning to the flank from the front. The same thing took place on the southern wing.

On 16 August, the III Corps repulsed the French II Corps by an attack against the flank and front. It was received by the Guard and part of the VI Corps. The other part of the latter, two divisions of the III Corps as well as the IV, went in echelons against the left German wing. They were forced to retire one after the other by Lehmann's half brigade, the 20th Division and Schwarzkoppen's half division. 18 August would have shown a similar picture had the French taken the offensive with their reserves on the right wing. Thus the turning and counter turning movements were limited to the flanking of the extreme Saxon wing by the French detachments in the wood of Jaumont.

In the struggle for the flanks, he wins whose last reserve is not behind the front but on the extreme wing. It can not be brought thither when the eagle eye of the commander recognizes the decisive point in the midst of the turmoil raging over many square miles, but it must be brought there during the march into battle, the march from the unloading stations, directed there from the railway transports.

It could not be foreseen whether the great surrounding battle would be waged at Koniggratz. But it was already recognized that the VIII Corps on the right and the VI on the left would ensure the decision, when the former crossed the Saxon frontier and the latter demonstrated into Moravia.

It is claimed that it is quite unnecessary to resort to such envelopments and struggles for the flanks. The enemy will assemble his reserves, pierce with his masses the front which had melted, in the meanwhile, to nothing, and put an end to everything. This was the plan of Terentius Varro that served him so badly.

Let us take Koniggratz again. It was surely unnecessary there to mass the greater part of the First Army before the center of the Austrian position and offer it as a bullet stop to the hostile artillery. It was likewise unjustifiable to use part of the Army of the Elbe against that front. Two

corps of the First Army would have sufficed to cover the entire front on the Bistritz and further beyond Benatek. The remainder of the Corps might have been attached to the Army of the Elbe. Should Benedek then undertake his threatening mass attack and should he have driven the two Prussian corps back, four corps brought from the north and three from the south against the flanks would have caused the inevitable catastrophe earlier and more effectively than the one that happened in reality.

The Germans marched to the Saar and to the Moselle according to Napoleon's mass tactics. They were to overwhelm the hostile position by continuous, well fed combat, shock after shock. They tried to achieve this also at Gravelotte and accomplished nothing but complete failure. At St. Privat, however, the deep columns saw long lines before them against which they could do nothing.

In the shortest time the linear tactics of infantry and artillery, condemned since Jena, were again assumed, though in a rough form. Line fought against line and in this combat the one who with greater front, could turn the hostile flank, won the victory. Instinctively did they return to the old mode of warfare, commended by Frederick the Great: "Attack them bravely with our heavy guns, fire case shot at them and then gain their flank."

THE BATTLES OF BEAUMONT AND SEDAN

The 16th and 18th of August did not bring a final result to the Germans. Bazaine had not been driven to the Belgian and Luxembourg frontiers for annihilation as Moltke desired but had returned to Metz. The 170,000 men, saved in that city, could be considered as eliminated from a field campaign, but since it was considered that 200,000 men were needed for their investment, the calculation, as far as numbers are considered, was not in favor of the Germans.

What was left—the Third Army with five and one half corps (the V, VI, XI, Bavarian I and II Corps, and Württemberg Division) and two cavalry divisions (2d and 4th) in the vicinity of Nancy, as well as the newly formed Army of the Meuse with three corps (Guard, IV, and XII) and four

cavalry divisions (Guard, 5th, 6th, 12th) west of Metz, about 240,000 men—was to continue the march against Paris. MacMahon assembled, on the road thither, an army of about 150,000 men from troops which, some 14 days ago, had suffered a severe defeat or had been shaken by the hurried retreat, and finally from all that could be gathered together. This army was not able to oppose successful resistance to the advancing German army and still less to open a road for itself through the hostile troops to the gates of Metz for the relief of Bazaine. Only a march for the relief of the capital appeared to remain. Not so well by reinforcing the garrison as by threatening the hostile flanks might MacMahon hinder, or at least for some time delay, the investment of the great fortress. Still before the beginning of his retreat, he only wanted to know whether Bazaine had succeeded in breaking through the ring which encircled him. Should the latter have succeeded in doing so, MacMahon would have gone, under any circumstances, to the assistance of his comrade.

The Germans considered it necessary, if possible, to prevent the Army of Chalons from retiring on Paris and to drive it back in a northerly direction. Thus the Army of the Meuse was to advance with its right wing (XII Corps) along the Etain—Verdun road to Chalons and reach St. Menehould on the 26th, while the Third Army should reach Vitry with its left wing. It was intended to direct the attack against the front and right flank of the hostile position from the line: St. Menehould—Vitry.

The German columns were far from this goal, when MacMahon started on the 21st for Rheims. He thought that he would be able to assist Bazaine from this point, as well as to reach Paris in time without being exposed, as at Chalons, to an overpowering attack. The Marshal and Napoleon, who happened to be at Imperial Headquarters, had lost the liberty of decision. The leadership had long since been surrendered into the power of public opinion. Its resolutions, inspired by the press and voiced by it, were simply transmitted by Parliament, the Council of Ministers and the Empress-Regent to Napoleon, MacMahon, or Bazaine. Thus

the matter of the Army of the frontier had been settled some ten days before. Now the quick release of the Army of the Rhine from this bulwark was entrusted to MacMahon.

The Marshal opposed firm resistance to Rouher, the President of the Senate, who personally brought the expression of the people's will. A march to the east would lead the army into unavoidable defeat, all the more, as nothing was known of Bazaine's intentions and plans. He would march to Paris on the 23d, should no news come until then from Bazaine. Rouher returned to Paris with the naive intention of impressing the people favorably, through a proclamation, towards MacMahon's return. Hardly had he left when a telegram of the 19th was received from Bazaine, sent on the day of his retreat to Metz. It closed with: "I still count on moving to the north and fighting my way via Montmedy on the road from St. Menehould to Chalons if the road is not strongly held. In the latter case I shall go to Sedan, and even Mezieres, to reach Chalons." After this information, which should not have been taken very seriously, MacMahon believed that Bazaine was already on the road to Montmedy and resolved to meet him at Stenay, right or wrong. Soon a telegram reached him from Paris, the Minister-President, in which it was urged that the junction with the Army of the Rhine take place as soon as possible.

On the 23d the French Army started from Rheims to the Suippe between Dontrien and St. Masmès.

The two German armies which reached on that day with the right wing the locality east of Verdun and with the left St. Dizier, found out gradually that the enemy had left the camp at Chalons, that he had marched to Rheims and taken a position there. A telegram arrived from London on the 25th announcing "MacMahon seeks junction with Bazaine," confirming current rumors, the information contained in captured letters, and newspaper reports.

In order to meet the enemy marching from Rheims via Vouziers and Stenay, Attigny, Le Chesne and, Beaumont, possibly via Rethel, Tourteron and Mouzon toward Metz, it was not possible to march in the direction hitherto followed.

Map 90.

A turning movement to the right must be made. On the 25th, the Army of the Meuse had reached with the right wing (XII Corps) Dombasle, the Third Army with the left (XI Corps) almost Vitry. Both could have turned to the right under very favorable circumstances had they halted their leading elements on the line: Dombasle—Vitry, and given each corps a separate road. On the 26th, the XII Corps, forming the pivot, could advance to Charny, the other corps could reach the line Dombasle—St. Menehould—Chalons.

On the same day, the German cavalry reconnoitered at Vouziers and Buzancy what was seemingly the right French wing. From this point the enemy could continue, on the following days, the march to Metz or turn against the approaching Germans or, lastly, escape an encounter with the superior hostile forces by a retreat.

All these possibilities could be met by sending two corps of the investing army from Briey and Conflans to Longuyon and Marville, the XII Corps from Charny to Jametz, the Guard Corps along the right bank of the Meuse, the IV and two corps of the Third Army between the Meuse and the Aisne, the remaining three and one half corps west of the latter river, cavalry divisions marching ahead of the entire front and especially in front of the left wing. Should the enemy march toward Metz or advance for attack between the Meuse and the Aisne or await there an attack in a favorable position, he still would have been attacked in the front and on one or both flanks and driven against the Belgian frontier. Only a French retreat would be doubtful, should it be started so early that the left German wing could not reach Mezieres ahead of the enemy. The Germans would then have to seek to advance to the south by turning to the left or facing left.

An advance, as pictured on Map 90, and as executed by 29 August, i.e., by the evening before the eve of the battle of Beaumont, corresponded to the instructions given by Moltke on another occasion "seek the enemy and defeat him." Moltke discarded here such an operation because he wanted, more than anything else, to oppose as great a number of corps as possible to the threatened relief of Metz.

To attain this, both armies had to turn from the line: Dombasle—Vitry, in a narrow front to the north. Not without many crossings and crowdings was it possible to execute this turning movement. The trains had mostly to be left behind just at the moment when advance through a mountainous terrain rendered the provisions of the supply columns most necessary.

For the security of the march and to support the Cavalry advancing to Veziers, Grand Pre, and Buzancy, the XII Corps started to Varennes on the 26th. It was followed by the Guard Corps, the IV, and the two Bavarian Corps in the direction of Dombasle, Nixeville, Verdun. The remaining corps of the Third Army prepared to advance on the following days in a northwesterly and northerly direction. Should the enemy continue his march to the east, it would hardly be possible to reach him west of the Meuse with superior numbers. He could gain the right bank of the river in two days. It was necessary to try and reach him there. According to Moltke's plan, the XII Corps, marching by way of Dun, the Guard Corps via Montfaucon and Consenvoye, the XIV via Charny should concentrate in the region of Damvillers by the 28th, two corps of the army of investment via Etain and Briey would be drawn to the right wing, the two Bavarian corps would follow to Azannes. Then no matter whether the hostile army, after crossing the Meuse, should turn to Damvillers or continue the march to Longuyon, there was still cause to hope that it would be driven to the Belgian frontier by one of the seven German corps.

The reports, brought by the cavalry, showed that MacMahon's march to Metz had come to a halt. The seven German corps at Damvillers would have no enemy before them on the 28th. Endeavors should be made to assemble superior forces on the left bank of the Meuse for a battle of annihilation. For this purpose the corps of the first line advanced on the 27th to the line: Stenay—Dun—Montfaucon—Clermont—St. Menehould, on the 28th to the line: Stenay—Dun—Bantheville—Varennes—Vienne le Chateau—Cernay. It was very probable that the army which had advanced from Stenay to Cernay would likewise find no enemy there.

Map 91.

Map 89.

As the German army turned to the north on the 26th, against the not yet located enemy, so did the French Army instinctively turn to the south against the advancing enemy. General Douay put the VII Corps into a position east of Vouziers facing to the west and sent forward one brigade to Grand Pre and one to Buzancy. The V Corps (Faily) advanced on the 26th to Le Chesne, the I (Ducrot) to Semuy and Attigny, the XII (Lebrun) to Tourteron. The German cavalry, which showed itself during the day before Buzancy, Grand Pre, and Vouziers, made General Douay think that an attack was impending. He decided to resist at Vouziers and Buzancy. MacMahon started on the 27th with the entire army to his assistance, but turned back when no enemy, except cavalry, was seen.

Map 91.

A decisive offensive, a rolling up of the advanced Army of the Meuse was afterwards recommended to MacMahon. Such an offensive could not have taken place before the 28th, when it would have met the XII Corps at Dun, the Guard Corps at Bantheville, the IV, sent from Montfaucon to Cierges, the Bavarian I Corps north of Varennes and would have found all other roads west strongly occupied. On the following day the right German wing would have halted, the left would have been sent forward. A complete surrounding of the French army would have taken place here and not at Sedan. Being unable to disregard these circumstances, good reports to the contrary notwithstanding, MacMahon found it inexpedient, in view of the German numerical superiority, either to await an attack or to venture one on his part.

He expected still less from the continuation of the march to Metz, since no news had come from Bazaine. He expected that part of the investing army would meet him, while the mass of the armies of the two Crown Princes would take him in flank and rear. If he would save his army from annihilation, all that remained for him to do was to retreat to Mezieres. Since the Germans had held back their left wing and had not sent even cavalry to the left of the Aisne and since a sufficient number of roads was at his disposition, the retreat, ordered the evening of the 27th, might have been

executed without molestation. The German march to the right would have been a blow in the air and a very difficult campaign to Paris would have loomed before them.

Count Palikao, the French Minister of War, helped the Germans at this critical juncture. He telegraphed MacMahon in answer to his report concerning his decision to retire: "Should you leave Bazaine in the lurch, a revolution will break out in Paris—Your prompt junction with Bazaine seems urgently necessary." A further telegram contained the decided demand of the Council of Ministers to hurry to Bazaine's relief. There no longer remained a choice. MacMahon decided to resume the march he had abandoned, and to continue it as well as possible until he should be impeded by the numerical superiority of the enemy. He understood clearly that this check would coincide probably with his complete annihilation. Officers were despatched on all sides to divert toward the east the units which had received orders to go west. Many corps were reached after they had already started on the march. The turning back and facing about of the long columns, the unavoidable crossing with others caused troubles which were doubly felt in the rain and on the bad roads. Only late in the night of the 28th did the last troops come to rest. On the Attigny—Voncq—Beaumont road, the I Corps had reached le Chesne, the XII, la Besace, its cavalry, Beaumont. On the Vouziers—Stenay road was the VII Corps turning from Quatre—Champs to Boulton-aux-Bois. General Faily had not dared to continue with the V Corps the march via Bar to Buzancy on account of the hostile cavalry, but had turned via Sommauthe and bivouacked in the evening at Belval and Bois des Dames.

The reports coming in to the German Royal Headquarters during the 28th, hinted at a retreat of the enemy to the northwest. At 7:00 PM, a turn to the right between Dun and Cernay was ordered for both armies on the line: Nouart—Vouziers. New reports coming in the evening persuaded Moltke that the enemy had not abandoned his plan of relieving Metz and that he would cross the Meuse at Stenay and below. He would find Stenay occupied and would be forced to turn against the Army of the Meuse on his right flank. As long as the latter was without support it would be well

Map 92.

for it to await in a suitable position, between Aincreville and Landres, the attack of the enemy who would soon appear on its left flank. Orders had been given to advance: the Bavarian I Corps from Varennes to St. Juvin, the II from Vienne le Chateau to Cernay, the V and the Wurttemberg Division from Cernay to Grand Pre. With these three and one half corps, which were to be followed on the left by the XI to Monthois and the VI to Vienne le Chateau, an advance was intended against the road: Buzancy—Stenay.

This calculation of Moltke would have been correct with any other enemy than MacMahon, who carried a forced pass given him by public opinion and must, under any circumstances, make an effort to cross the Meuse and still avoid if possible, a combat with a superior enemy.

Upon hearing that Stenay was occupied by 15,000 Germans, MacMahon gave up crossing at that point and ordered that on the 29th the XII Corps should march to Mouzon, the I to Roncourt, the V to Beaumont, the VII to La Besace. The XII and I Corps with Margueritte's and Bonnemain's Cavalry Divisions executed this order and the former sent outposts to the roads to Carignan and Stenay as far as Inor. The VII Corps, deceived by many false reports, reached from Boulton aux Bois only as far as Ochey and St. Pierremont. Since the officer carrying the order to the V Corps had been captured by a patrol of Uhlans, General Faily led his two divisions, according to a previous order, to Beaufort and Beaulieu to await there MacMahon's orders for the attack on Stenay.

On the German side, the XII Corps went early on the 29th via Dun across the Meuse and occupied a position between that town and Aincreville. The reports arriving there said nothing of an impending attack, but much more of the retreat of the enemy. It seemed necessary to gain contact with the enemy, all the more since a Royal order of the evening before read—"Continue the offensive against the road: Vouziers—Buzancy—Stenay. Its prompt occupation by the army of the Meuse is enjoined should it be occupied by inferior hostile forces." Since this condition seemed to be fulfilled according to all reports received, the Crown Prince of Saxony sent the 1st Division of the Guard Corps

to Buzancy, the 2d to Thenorgues, the XII Corps from Aincreville to Nouart, the IV to Remonville. The enemy retired to St. Pierremont before the Guard, but the advance guard of the XII Corps came at Nouart upon the V French Corps. The combat which took place at this point was broken off by the Saxons in order to avoid isolated encounters, after the superiority of the French had been ascertained. When the Saxons reached the height between Nouart and Taily on their retreat the French Corps, having at last received the army orders, marched off in an opposite direction. Two brigades, remaining as rearguard, covered this withdrawal until during the night the patrols of the 12th Cavalry Division reported the retreat of the entire corps in the direction of Beaumont. The Guard cavalry ascertained during the night that the rearguard of the VII Corps had remained at Pierremont.

Royal Headquarters had some other reports of the early morning and forenoon hours. It was not known whether they were still good or had been rendered worthless by events. Moltke assumed, in the meanwhile that the French were advancing toward the Meuse by two roads via Voncq, Le Chesne, Stonne, La Besace and Beaumont, and by Vouziers, Buzancy, and Nouart. They could not use the southern road because the Army of the Meuse had reached Buzancy and Nouart and had been obliged to take the northern. The march would not be possible on this one either. It was, consequently, probable that the French would await a battle in a good position between Le Chesne and Beaumont reported to be the extreme points occupied by them. The part of this position east of the Buzancy—Raucourt road should be attacked by the Army of the Meuse, supported by the two Bavarian corps.

Map 93.

The strip west of the above road to Le Chesne fell to the share of the Third Army. It was left to army headquarters how the attack should take place. Since, however, there were scarcely more than three corps for the attack against the front: La Besace—Beaumont, including the two Bavarian units, it was expedient to send two corps of the Army of the Meuse across the river to turn the hostile left flank. Had the left flank of the Third Army been extended in

the same way across the Aisne, both armies would have had to execute the movements shown on Map 93. There was a probability then of driving the enemy to the Belgian frontier, should he hold out between Le Chesne and Beaumont, retreat, or advance to the right or left.

Map 94.

Both armies, however, preferred not to surround the enemy, but to persuade him to retire by compact, separate attacks, although retreat had been his intention. Moreover they translated the information received from Royal Headquarters: "The enemy stands *between* Le Chesne and Beaumont" into "the enemy stands *at* Le Chesne and *at* Beaumont." According to this view, the Army of the Meuse would attack the enemy supposed to be at Beaumont with the XII, IV, and Bavarian I Corps in the first line, with the Guard and Bavarian II Corps in the second line, while the Third Army would advance against the enemy which was not at Le Chesne, with the IX Corps and the Wurttemberg Division in the first, and the VI Corps in the second line. The enemy, whose presence was ascertained to be between St. Pierremont and Oches, was taken as non existant. The V Corps, which had been sent via these points to Stonne, had to maintain communications between the armies only and turn, according to circumstances, against the Nothing at Le Chesne or reinforce the overstrong body of troops sent to Beaumont. The fiction that the road to Stonne was free of the enemy could not be lastingly entertained, no more than that Le Chesne was strongly occupied. It was soon found that there was not a man in Le Chesne, that the enemy, reported at Oches, had gone to Stonne and had occupied a strong position with at least a rearguard. In the meanwhile, army headquarters decided to send the XI Corps and the Wurttemberg Division to La Berliere. It might be expected in the afternoon of the 30th that three corps would attack the enemy at Beaumont and two and one half the one at Stonne. Three corps were to be kept intact as reserve.

It had been decided that for the first attack, the XII Corps should advance with one division via Laneuville on the highroad, with the other from Beauclair through the woods, the IV Corps west of it by two roads through the woods, the

Bavarian I Corps on the highroad via Sommauthe—all five columns on Beaumont. The Guard Corps was to remain at Fosse, the Bavarian II Corps at Sommauthe in reserve. Of the three roads through the woods designated for the advance, the two eastern ones came close to the highroad in front of Beaumont, so that only three roads opened on the city: the Stenay—Beaumont road, taken by the XII Corps and the 7th Division, the road from Sommauthe, taken by the Bavarian Corps; and between these was a path through the woods for the 8th Division. According to the then existing views and principles, the march order, issued by the Army of the Meuse, was beyond criticism. A mass with the narrowest front and of the greatest depth could be formed by the three corps in front of Beaumont. The enemy, though much weaker, could, by deploying on a wider front, oppose as great if not greater firing strength against them. Should he retire, he could be pursued only by small detachments, so that he would be able to continue unmolested on his retreat should he have taken care to provide sufficient crossings over the Meuse. A strong reserve of two corps, which was to be held intact, could hardly compensate all the disadvantages of such an attack. At any rate a change should have been made in these orders, when late in the evening the cavalry sent across the Meuse, reported the advance of the enemy from Mouzon to Inor, thus confirming all information which had been received through a captured French army order. It was evident that the situation, according to which Moltke had worded his order on the 30th, was no longer the same. The enemy, apparently, did not wish to accept a battle between Beaumont and Le Chesne but had crossed the Meuse with part of his forces and would follow with the rest of his troops to the other bank on the following day. Moltke had foreseen this and also ordered a crossing of the Meuse. It was, consequently, advisable that of the surplus forces at the disposition of the Army of the Meuse, at least two corps be sent across the river in order to bar the advance of the enemy in the narrow space between the Meuse and the Belgian frontier and force him into a position where he would have to weather an attack from the west and eventually be annihilated. Army headquarters, how-

ever, did not wish to be disturbed in the measures they had ordered. The entire apparatus of 150,000 men was put in motion in the ordered formation, for the purpose of inflicting slight losses to a corps already in retreat.

Map 95.

Orders were given so that the surprise attack should take place against Beaumont immediately after the noon hour. That the enemy was still found there was due to the patrol, which had captured the order sent by MacMahon to the V Corps. This bad luck was the cause for that corps not starting in the morning but in the evening of the 29th, reaching Beaumont in the night and requiring the forenoon for the recuperation of the exhausted strength and not for the continuation of the march.

The officers and troops were sitting at their meal in camp south of Beaumont between the road to Stenay and the road to Beausejour, when the advance guard of the 8th Division (4th Jagers) emerged from the wood between Tuilerie and the farm of Belle Volee. It was intended not to disturb the carefree soldiers, but to have the division come up under cover. But when a peasant rushed to the French camp with the cry "the enemy is here" and the cauldrons were quickly abandoned, the division commander, General V. Scholer, believed that he had to take advantage of the advance guard batteries which had just come up. A few shots directed into the dense mass had their effect. But the French had soon formed a swarm of skirmishers which took advantage of the far-reaching long range arm and caused such considerable losses not only to the Jager battalion, but also to the two batteries, that almost all the gunners were killed. The situation changed when the French advanced in dense skirmish lines followed by units in close order for attack and entered into the zone of effective fire of the Jagers and, showered with bullets in their turn, were forced to retreat.

A second French attack was directed against the 66th Regiment which, supported by four batteries, advanced at the head of the 7th Division via Belle Tour to Beaumont. This attack was likewise repulsed. In the meanwhile, the deployment of the 8th Division on the height of the Ferme de Petite Foret had made but little progress. As the com-

mander of the advance guard kept a company, each regimental commander a battalion and the brigade commander two battalions at their disposition, and since the artillery needed special covers and each building a garrison, there were only three and one half battalions and 4 batteries available, although the infantry had emerged from the wood in almost complete formation, with three batteries of the 7th Division from the south and southeast for the attack of the French camp, which was soon evacuated after a combat, in which great losses were inflicted by the chassepots, leaving a few prisoners and guns.

The 7th Division stood, during the fight, south of the Stenay—Beaumont road. Neither the 66th Regiment nor the 26th, following the former, had noticed the height southeast of Beaumont which dominated the camp, the city, and the route of retreat. The consequence was that the enemy who stood there or went there, nestled in the ditches behind the road embankment and fired on the right wing of the 66th. A few companies turned to the right, and after a hard fight drove the enemy out, who then retreated to Letanne, pursued by weak detachments of the Germans.

The 66th Regiment was followed from Belle Tour to Beaumont by the 26th, and the latter by the 14th Brigade. To the same point streamed the greater part of the 16th Brigade and the 71st Regiment, via Petite Foret. Only one to two battalions of that brigade and the 71st Regiment took the direction to the height west of Beaumont. Wherever they turned, long lines of artillery confronted the Germans, extending to right and left north of Beaumont. To engage them, the 14 batteries of the IV Corps went into position, south of the city with the right wing on the hill south of Letanne, the left beyond the highroad to Sommauthe. This line was extended on the right by the 23d Division which had advanced with six battalions and ten batteries, crossing the Wamme Creek partly at Wamme and partly at Beaulieu and came on the hill east of Beaumont. The left wing was lengthened by the three batteries of the Bavarian I Corps which had been sent in advance. The fire of 25 batteries achieved nothing but that the hostile artillery, after covering

the retreat of the infantry, withdrew from position to position, disappearing at last in the rear of the Bois de Givodeau. During this artillery duel, the battalions and 4 batteries of the IV Corps deployed in and south of Beaumont and joined the XII Corps which, with the exception of the six battalions and ten batteries, was on the hill south of Letanne left of the Wamme Creek.

The Bavarian I Corps had accelerated its march on hearing the thunder of the guns. General Schumacher, commanding the 2d Division, the leading unit, who had hurried to the battlefield, had the proposition made him by a general staff officer of the IV Corps to take the direction of the farm La Thibaudine, as the enemy, retreating from Beaumont, could be best taken in flank from the heights at that point.

The general accepted it willingly. His advanced cavalry, however, was fired at from the woods south of the farm of La Harnoterie and in retreating, also from La Thibaudine. The former fire came from a French detachment of the V Corps which had retreated from Beaumont to La Harnoterie, the latter from the advance guard of Conseil Dumesnil's Division, marching from Oches and La Besace to Mouzon, while General Douay had cautiously taken the road leading to Remilly via Stonne and Raucourt with the two other divisions of the VII Corps.

When the 4th Brigade, at the head of the Bavarian 2d Division, deployed and advanced to La Thibaudine, fire was directed against it from Le Grand Dieulet. It was forced to turn partly left. Another part continued its march to La Thibaudine, drove off the enemy who took position in the woods east of the Yoncq Brook north of the La Besace—Beaumont road. After a short fire fight north and south of the main road the French were driven off, by a resolute attack, to Warniforet, so quickly that the 3d Brigade which was to make a flanking attack from the south through Le Grand Dieulet, met only a few isolated Frenchmen. A Jager battalion had, in the meanwhile, covered the right flank against La Harnoterie. Jointly with a battalion of the 86th Regiment, which had come by the ravine situated between Beau-

mont and La Harnoterie, and with the aid of two Prussian and one Bavarian battery, this enemy was also driven off.

The 2d Battalion of the 86th Regiment formed on the left wing the advance guard of the IV Corps which started to Beaumont about 3:00 PM, after a rest of two hours.

The 7th Division, in deep formation with two battalions in front, advanced east, the 8th Division west of the road to Mouzon. The Bavarian I Corps was directed by Headquarters of the Third Army to advance against La Besace with as great a strength as possible in order to fill "the gap existing in the line between Beaumont and Stonne." Therefore only a detachment of four battalions and two batteries under Colonel Schuch, was left on the left wing of the IV Corps. The rest of the 2d Division followed up from Warnioret, the enemy retreating to the north, while the 1st Division was started on the road to La Besace. Thus the advance was organized on the left wing in a more orderly manner. There might have been sufficient time also on the right wing, after the taking of Beaumont, to send the XII Corps to Pouilly and the Guard Corps to Stenay across the Meuse in order to achieve some success with the former at Mouzon. But army headquarters insisted on leaving the XII Corps in rear of the right wing and sending the Guard Corps by the paths through the woods previously used by the IV Corps.

Map 96.

The two battalions of the 13th Brigade at the head of the 7th Division went along the narrow ridge between the main road and the Meuse, drove out the hostile rear guard from La Sartelle and the Bois de Givodeau, but saw themselves facing a strong position on the northern edge of the wood.

The two hours' pause ensuing during the closing up of the IV Corps, assembling it in a very narrow front in and at Beaumont, reforming the mixed units, and ordering the troops for a new advance, might have given Faily such a start that he could have crossed over several bridges to the right bank of the Meuse with but a few rear guard skirmishes. But since he could hardly count on such a pause and did not wish to be thrown across the river in disorder, he

had occupied a position on the heights of Villemonty and the Mont De Brune which he must hold until nightfall, then to retire unnoticed over prepared crossings. General Lebrun sent one infantry and one cavalry brigade of the XII Corps via Mouzon to his support and had the high right bank of the Meuse occupied between Warmonterne and the Alma farm by Lacretelle's Division. The left wing of the French position was thus formidably reinforced, strengthened also by the fact that the hostile artillery could not cross the Bois de Givodeau at all and the infantry only in small detachments.

Army headquarters thought to obtain a breathing space by enveloping the left wing from the valley of the Meuse. The 45th Brigade was ordered to advance by the road running along the bank. Pressed into the narrowest space, it was showered by Lacretelle's Division with gun, mitrailleuse, and chassepot fire. It was impossible to storm the strongly occupied heights of Villemonty, having such an enemy in the rear. The plan to envelop the enemy had to be abandoned, the brigade taken back to La Sartelle. Only two companies, which had succeeded in occupying the north-eastern corner of the Bois de Givodeau, were left there.

The question now was, what should be done; should there be sent, as at Gravelotte, into a continuous combat, battalion after battalion, regiment after regiment, brigade after brigade, all mixed up in a crowd, from the wood against the French batteries, to suffer unlimited losses, the dissolution of all the units and boundless confusion, or should the numerous reserves, as at Sadowa, and the Bois de la Cusse, be used as a target for the never missing hostile shells? Neither one nor the other means seemed tempting. The idea came to some, especially to corps headquarters, that the XII Corps belonged on the right and not on the left bank of the Meuse. It might drive thence the enemy by taking his flank under fire and bar the line of retreat through Mouzon to the other enemy who had occupied an impregnable position across the German front. The road seemed too long and the day too far advanced for the execution of such splendid plans. The consequences of such a model army order, according to the

lights of the time, had to be borne and it was necessary to wait for assistance to come from some other side.

At the time when the 13th Brigade advanced against the Bois de Givodeau, the commanding general of the IV Corps, von Alvensleben, had reached the conclusion that Hill 918, west of the woods, was strongly occupied. He ordered the 14th Brigade, following the 13th, to advance to the left of the main road to take, in joint action with the 8th Division, the supposed bulwark of the enemy. When the brigade had crossed the road, it filled the entire space between the latter and the Yoncq Creek and was able alone, with the batteries attached, to take the hill, occupied only by a rearguard, by an attack from the south and southwest. The 8th Division, which had remained behind, found itself excluded and decided to go with its greater part and the detachment of Colonel Schuch into the valley of the Yoncq and the other side of the Yoncq Creek, while the smaller part pushed in between the 13th and 14th Brigades. Thus the IV Corps obtained a more extended, though still a very modest, front which permitted its forces to have some effect. The advance continued, in about the following order: from right to left: 4 battalions of the 8th Division, the 14th Brigade, 8 battalions of the 8th Division, 4 battalions under Colonel Schuch; Mont de Brune was taken by attacks against the front and flank, the hill north of Pourron was occupied through the complete turning of the wing, the left flank was extended to Autrecourt, a descent made down the valley of the river under cover of the batteries in position on the heights, the suburb of Mouzon captured, the enemy driven into the Meuse and the columns, retiring on the opposite bank were taken under fire. Counterattacks and cavalry charges—as customary in such situations—took place. They only increased the defeat. The enemy could no longer hold the position at Villemontry against the 13th and 45th Brigades. He was driven to the Meuse. Not all reached the opposite bank, some died in the river, others were captured, others still hid in the thickets of the bank, as darkness had already set in. Mouzon and the bridge over the Meuse remained in the hands of the French. An attempt to take the city under cover of dark-

ness failed. The Germans had to be satisfied with the occupation of the suburb. In rear of it the IV Corps went into camp, north of Beaumont the XII, south of it the Guard Corps.

The Bavarian 1st Division had marched from Sommauthe to La Besace and further toward Raucourt. This forced the French rear guard at Stonne to retire in time. It was caught up with north of Raucourt and driven back to Remilly after a fierce combat. After the long march from St. Juvin (Map 94) to Raucourt, after many detours and fights, darkness stopped the pursuit. The 1st Division went into bivouac.

Map 97.

The roar of guns from Beaumont and Mouzon caused the V Corps and the 4th Cavalry Division to march to the road: Buzancy—Raucourt, so that in the evening there stood: The Bavarian 1st Division at Raucourt, the 4th Cavalry Division at Flaba, the Bavarian 2d Division north, the V Corps south of La Besace, the Bavarian II Corps at Sommauthe. The XI Corps had reached Stonne, the 2d Cavalry Division, Ochles, and the Wurttemberg Division, Verrieres. Quite separately from the army, as if forgotten, stood the VI Corps at Vouziers, and the 5th and 6th Cavalry Divisions at Tourteron and Le Chesne.

Casualties of 1800 dead for the French and 3500 for the Germans in the battle of Beaumont would speak not unfavorably for the former, if the loss of 3000 missing, among them 2000 unwounded prisoners, and of 42 guns, as well as the complete discouragement of the entire army already depressed, had not been added to them. Nevertheless, the French had escaped luckily enough. The battle, which MacMahon wanted to avoid as long as possible, had taken place without being, as had been feared, a battle of annihilation. It would have been such if the different army headquarters had left fewer corps in reserve and sent more to the front, if their armies were less compressed in the center and more extended on the wings and if the corps, not sent against the enemy, had not remained stationary but had rapidly advanced. The battle of the 30th, and a pursuit on the 31st would have caused a complete encircling of the French army.

Such an annihilating result had been luckily averted but it was also clearly shown that the continuation of operations for the relief of Bazaine was impossible. If annihilation beyond peradventure of a doubt were to be avoided, the retreat must commence immediately. Two roads were available in a western and two in a southerly direction for one corps each: from Remilly on the left bank of the Meuse via Donchery and Flize, from Mouzon via Sedan and Mezieres, from Stenay along the Meuse via Verdun and from Carignan via Montmedy and Fresnes.

By such a retreat directed to opposite sides, the army would have been split in two and naturally become unfit for combat. But it was desired to avoid a battle. This could be attained by retreating over as many roads as possible and in different directions. Should the movement be started in the evening of the 30th and so much attained in the night that the troops should be outside the reach of the enemy, the retreat would have succeeded as that at Worth and Spichern and, with the aid of railways, Ducrot, Faily, Lebrun, and Douay would have met in Paris as, a few days earlier, MacMahon, Faily, and Douay met in Chalons. If the army must be kept together, a retreat or the continuation of the retreat to the south offered better chances and greater freedom of movement than a march to the west. MacMahon, however, did not wish to use the road, unexpectedly opened to him but to continue the retreat to Mezieres as had been planned.

Although the troops were very much discouraged and greatly exhausted by the strain and the lack of provisions, the night march to Sedan was effected in good order. The V Corps, in front, reached Fond de Givonne, via Douzy and Bazeilles, and the northern glacis of the fortress. The three divisions of the XII Corps followed at intervals of one and one half hours and occupied the right bank of the Givonne from Bazeilles to Daigny. The rear was formed by two divisions of the I Corps, covering the retreat east of Douzy and lengthening the left wing of the XII Corps to Givonne. The smaller portion of the VII Corps had reached Mouzon early, while the larger crossed the Meuse at Remilly in the evening

and joined the march columns of the other corps. When the reserve batteries and the last division (Liebert's) were about to cross the Meuse at Remilly, the bridge broke down. General Douay was forced to remain with this portion of his corps on the left bank. Instead of rejoicing at having a special march road and using it at least as far as Donchery, he turned at Sedan into the one road which had been assigned to the entire army. He reached Floing during the 31st where his remaining units joined his corps. Early on that day the army was assembled near Sedan. Only General Ducrot with two divisions of the I Corps and Margueritte's Cavalry Division were still southeast of Carignan at Bligny and advanced only in the afternoon to the position on the Givonne.

It was not necessary to await him for the continuation of the retreat. Had the advance guard started on the morning of the 31st, followed by one corps after the other, Ducrot would have come up early enough to join the long march column as rearguard. But the troops were too tired by the marches of the 30th until late in the night of the 31st, had been too long without nourishment to continue the retreat in the morning. A rest until noon was urgently needed and not critical.

Assembled in a narrow space, immediately in front of Sedan, the French Army could be considered secure. It was protected by the Meuse and the Givonne against the south and east, whence the enemy might be expected. In the north was the inviolable Belgium. No attack could be expected from that direction, those from the two other sides could be easily repulsed. Even a retreat to the west via Mezieres was considered safe.

The road leading to Mezieres was narrowed between St. Menges and Vrine aux Bois by the bend of the Meuse from Iges on the one side and the almost inaccessible ravine east of the Bois de la Falizette on the other to a narrow dam and a narrow bridge. This defile had to be crossed by 140,000 men with horses, guns, vehicles, and baggage, in order to reach at Mezieres the other bank of the Meuse and freedom. The habit of the German army of forming a mass by placing

corps in rear of corps, compressing them from right and left, was to blame that this defile was not closed to this gigantic column. They would not extend their left wing to Mezieres so as not to be forced to this extension by a surplus of strength and the IV Corps was sent back to Attigny for the security of communications in the rear. MacMahon could be fully reassured as to Mezieres even had not General Vinoy reached it in the night of the 30th with part of the XIII Corps.

He likewise did not worry much about the Meuse between Frenois and Mezieres, the strip between Donchery and Flize. He did not deem the Germans capable of so great a turning movement. He thus underrated his opponent considerably. The flank on the Meuse ought to have been secured. It was not sufficient to destroy the existing bridges. It was more important to prevent their restoration and the building of new ones, as well as their use by the enemy. As soon as the troops had rested somewhat from the strain of the foregoing days, the VI Corps should have undertaken the defense of the strip of the Meuse between Frenois—Flize. The XIII Corps (Vinois) which had reached Mezieres in the evening of the 30th, took up a position at Boulzincourt—Poix. North of the main road were other roads which were joined by short cuts and bridges into a second marching road, debouching at Charleville. Two corps could thus start simultaneously. A third occupied a position on the Givonne and followed on both roads. On the same, parallel with the latter, the VII Corps, after destroying the bridges over the Meuse, moved from Donchery over the bridge at Les Ayvelles in the direction of Warne-court, and lastly the XIII Corps. The retreat in a southerly or southeasterly direction could be made in four columns marching side by side over a sufficient number of roads. If the time between the noon of 31 August, and the morning of 1 September, were not much overdrawn, all molestation worthy of the name, would be excluded.

No column roads were designated. The VII Corps did not go to Donchery and the XIII remained at Mezieres. Only the order to destroy the bridges between Sedan and Mezieres

Map 98.

was given. This order was strictly obeyed in regard to bridges situated near Mezieres, which could have been used by the French. A company of engineers was entrusted with the destruction of the most important bridge at Donchery and taken there by train from Sedan. It reached there luckily. The engineer of the locomotive, somewhat excited by the proximity of the enemy, pulled out his train before the barrels of powder and necessary tools had been unloaded. The company did not think it essential to look for other means of destroying the bridge.

Even without the destruction of the bridge at Donchery, the retreat might have been made had it been started early enough. 31 August passed, however, with no order issued.

MacMahon could hardly have understood the seriousness of the situation, was the criticism. It was only too clear to him. It was quite clear to him when he started on the march from Rheims on the 23d, and it was quite clear on the 28th when he continued it again by the explicit order from Paris "to avoid a revolution." After the battle of the 30th, he believed himself justified in abandoning the fatal plan and starting the retreat. If the self-sacrificing combat, the heroic courage of the troops and the downfall under the brutal strength of numerical superiority had been painted in true colors, public opinion would have had some consideration, approved the retreat and postponed somewhat the outbreak of the revolution. Unfortunately, Napoleon did not recognize the lucky gift brought him by the battle of Beaumont. Made stupid by the habit of a long reign, to beautify every misfortune, every failure, showing the blackest in a good light, he could not grasp the idea that to tell the truth in so many words would serve the purpose, and in a telegram to the Empress mentioned only a "quite insignificant combat." It was impossible for MacMahon to let himself be diverted from an important problem by an "insignificant combat," the problem which the Nation had placed in his hands. That he had gone as far as Sedan may be considered as a treachery. Only under coercion which nothing could stem, could he dare to start on the retreat. A new battle had to be fought. The situation was not desperate as yet.

It would be possible to defend oneself gloriously in rear of the Givonne, as subsequent events showed, and retreat in the end "on account of lack of munitions and provisions." It was only necessary to secure the strip of the Meuse between Mezieres and Sedan. For taking serious and adequate measures, the apathy, relaxation, and resignation to the inevitable had gone too far. MacMahon may also have thought that an extension of his position along the Givonne and the Meuse to Mezieres was too long. He wanted to keep his forces more closely together. The position, selected by him, was defensible. The front was formed by the Meuse and the fortifications of Sedan. The left flank on the deeply cut Givonne from Bazeilles to north of Givonne was covered by the XII and I Corps, the right flank and the rear by the VII Corps on the Floing Creek. The V Corps remained as a general reserve close to the fortress. Thus three fronts had been formed, all difficult to attack. Their weakness lay in that the attack against one of them would be, at the same time, an attack against the flank and rear of the other.

Map 97.

The Germans might have, on the 30th, outflanked, surrounded, and crushed the weak enemy. They thought to solve this problem by coming as close together as possible. At the moment when they ought to have cut off the retreating enemy entirely by a wide front, they formed as if they had to deliver a blow into the heart or break through an iron wall in its center. Moltke tried to repair what had been spoiled. On the 31st, it was ordered to "continue the attack, enveloping both flanks." The Army of the Meuse was charged to bar the French left wing from escaping in an easterly direction and therefore advance with two corps on the right bank of the Meuse. The Third Army was ordered to go against the front and right flank of the enemy.

In compliance with this order, the Guard Corps of the Army of the Meuse went to Pouilly and the XII at Letanne across the Meuse. The former took the road via Carignan had reached Pouru-aux-Bois and Poru St. Remy. The latter remained on the left bank of the Chiers and occupied Tetaigne, Brevilly, Douzy, Mairy, and Amblimont. The IV Corps remained at Mouzon on the left bank of the Meuse.

Of the Third Army, the Bavarian I Corps marched to Remilly, the XI, via Chemery to Donchery, the Wurttemberg Division via Vendresse to Boutaucourt; in the second line went the Bavarian II Corps to Raucourt, the V to Chemery. Moltke had supposed that the crossing over the Meuse would be destroyed and occupied and had therefore issued the order to advance only as far as the river and to take the camps and moving troops in the opposite valley under artillery fire. But when the advance guard of the XI Corps reached Donchery, it found the bridge intact, the point unoccupied and from the hill of Frenois, the 4th Cavalry Division saw the white tents of the camp north of Sedan.

The French were still at Sedan. It may be, however, surmised that they would march along the Givonne in the morning, at the latest, to Mezieres, protected by a rearguard. It did not seem necessary to cut off their way to that city. The Third Army would cross the Meuse at Donchery and over other bridges, prevent the enemy from marching further, force him to fight and throw him back on the Belgian frontier. The XI Corps occupied Donchery with an advance guard, Frenois with a flank detachment, and advanced to Cheveuges, the V Corps to Chehery and Omicourt. The Wurttemberg Division, met, coming from Vendresse, cavalry at Boutaucourt and infantry at Flize, driving them in the direction of Mezieres. Outposts were placed toward Chalandry, Flize was occupied by the advance guard and Boutaucourt by the Division.

These small encounters were without significance, but they showed that the enemy was at Mezieres and that he could attack the left flank of the Germans, assemble forces at any rate and weaken the Third Army for the decisive battle. This army might have been stronger had not the VI Corps and the 5th Cavalry Division been left at Attigny. They might, as stated in the General Staff Account, meet all the movements of the enemy in rear of the army, from this point, and bar the way to Rheims and Paris to the French troops stationed at Mezieres. The corps did not suffice, in the least, for either of the problems. It did not meet the French XIII Corps in time, which threatened the rear of

the Third Army, and it had not barred the way to Rheims and Paris to the French troops from Mezieres. But it might have solved both problems had it accompanied the advance of the Germans to Mezieres, on the left wing.

On the right wing of the Third Army, the Bavarian I Corps found the bridge at Remilly destroyed and saw French columns marching to Bazeilles on the opposite bank. An artillery duel opened across the river. The Bavarian artillery line extended gradually to le Pont Maugy, as artillery units arrived. French skirmishers, which had advanced to the Meuse and across the railway bridge, molested the gunners. One company of Jagers drove the French from the left bank, another company of Jagers drove away the workmen who were about to demolish the bridge supports. Both stormed across the bridge, in spite of the hot fire, threw the powder into the Meuse and occupied the railway embankment. Upon the arrival of one more company the hostile sharpshooters were driven south of Bazeilles, the point was occupied and the advance continued to the northern edge. The French had in the meanwhile, broken off the artillery duel and retired north. They faced partly about to reconquer the lost village. For two hours did the five companies of Jagers under Major Raschreiter repulse the attacks of the superior French. Since, however, General von der Tann wanted to avoid isolated combats, and forbade sending for reinforcements to the other bank of the Meuse, the Major was forced to an orderly retreat. The pontoon train had arrived, in the meanwhile, and built a bridge at Aillicourt. It was protected, as well as the railway bridge, by infantry and artillery positions, on the left bank of the Meuse, in rear of which the troops bivouacked.

By the provisions of an order, sent out in the evening of the 31st, the XI and V Corps were to advance early on 1 September via Donchery to Vrigne-aux-Bois, the Wurtemberg Division was to cross the Meuse over a bridge not yet constructed at Dom le Mesnil and take a position so as to be able to face Mezieres or to serve as reserve to both corps. The Bavarian II Corps was to occupy with one division the heights opposite Donchery, with the other those of Frenois

and Wadelincourt, the 6th Cavalry Division to hold itself ready at Flize, the 2d at Boutaucourt, the 4th south of Frenois. The Army of the Meuse was to retain its location of the previous day "to bar the retreat of the enemy in an easterly direction." Headquarters of the Army of the Meuse thought it had already accomplished this duty by sending the Guard to Pouru-aux-Bois and Pouru St. Remy, the XII Corps to Douzy and the IV to Mouzon. A day of rest for 1 September had thus been planned, although the troops had been ordered to be ready at 7:00 AM.

Headquarters of the Third Army shared the opinion held by Royal Headquarters that the enemy would begin his retreat to Mezieres in the night. The Third Army would thus, in crossing the Meuse at Donchery and Dom le Mesnil with two and one half corps, meet considerable forces on the road: St. Menges—Mezieres, the attack of which would not be rendered easier by the terrain. It would be most desirable that the part of the enemy, left at Sedan, be kept there and prevented from reinforcing the troops already on the march. The Bavarian I Corps was, consequently, ordered to "hold that part of the enemy which opposed it." Information was sent to the commander of the neighboring troops concerning all the measures taken and the success expected might be considerably heightened by the assistance of the Army of the Meuse. The Crown Prince of Saxony recognized that an attack would correspond better with the holding of the enemy than a passive occupation of positions, and decided not only to hold the enemy, supposed to be in rear of the Givonne, but to prevent him from marching to Belgium. This required an attack against the front and the envelopment of the left wing.

It was known from the reports of the cavalry that Villers Cernay was occupied by a strong rearguard on the evening of the 31st. The hostile left wing was, consequently, at least at the village of Givonne if not further north. To surround it and cut off its principal road to Belgium, the German right wing was to march to La Chapelle and further to Illy. Thus, the Bavarian I Corps was to attack the south side of Bazeilles and the front of the position at Givonne as far as La

Ramorie (1 km. north of Bazeilles). The XII Corps was to move from Douzy via Rubecourt with one division against Daigny, with the other via Villers Cernay against Givonne. The Guard Corps should march from Pouru-aux-Bois direct, from Pouru St. Remy via Francheval to Villers Cernay and thence, by various roads, without crossing the XII Corps, via La Chapelle to Illy. The IV Corps was to follow the Bavarian I Corps with one division, with the other the Guard Corps. The enemy would thus, inasmuch as he was north of Sedan, if not driven back, at least be held fast and kept from Belgium. A battle line of 11 km. must have appeared, in the time of mass formations, too extensive. Less than half was found sufficient. Four corps were thus placed on a width of front of 5 km. and of these three and one half corps were compressed into a front of 3 km. In spite of this small extent of the battlefield, the conduct of battle was by no means united. This was caused by the Bavarian I Corps starting at 3:00 AM, to Bazeilles, situated there in immediate vicinity, and by the distant corps of the Army of the Meuse starting at 5:00 AM, in the direction of Givonne.

Map 100.

General von der Tann hoped to be able to take Bazeilles, which was in his hands the day before, easily in the night and fog. The French had, in the meanwhile occupied the point with a brigade of Vassoigne's Division and prepared it for obstinate resistance. Great massive buildings, high walls, several tributaries of the Givonne facilitated the holding of a nucleus of houses and gardens, reaching in the north-westerly direction with Villa Beaurmann close to Balan, and toward the east from the railway depot via Chateau Dorival and Chateau Monvillers as far as La Monville was a line almost without a break. The entire energy of the enemy was directed against Bazeilles, which was comparatively harmless and farthest from the decisive point of St. Menges which remained unheeded.

Four battalions of the Bavarian 2d Brigade crossed the railway bridge. The Jager battalion in the lead penetrated at 4:00 AM, through dense fog from the south into Bazeilles, but was received with fire in front from a barricade, in the flanks from the two story houses lining the two sides of the

street. The Jagers sought shelter in a neighboring street, but found it also barricaded. The three succeeding battalions, later 4 battalions more, advanced. A battle raged in the streets and houses in which inhabitants also took part with all kind of alternating success and failures, counterattacks, and losses. Reinforcements arrived after a lengthy period of time for the Bavarians over the pontoon bridge and deployed gradually against Dorival and Monvillers. Three brigades were thus utilized; the fourth was kept in position as reserve south of Bazeilles. On the side of the enemy there advanced the 2d Brigade of Vassoigne's Division, one brigade of the I Corps and parts of Goze's Division of the V Corps to Bazeilles, while Lacretelle's Division of the XII Corps, Lartigue's and Wolff's Divisions of the I Corps deployed in the first line, l'Heriller's one half Division and Pelle's Division in the second line on the heights of the right bank of the Givonne and occupied with advance detachments all the villages in the valleys of the river from La Moncelle to Laminoir.

The Army of the Meuse did not consider what might have been already gathered from the reports of the cavalry that the attack would have for objective a front of 7 km. and that Bazeilles and La Moncelle formed only its right wing. It kept fast to the words: the enemy retreats to Mezieres and has left a rearguard at Bazeilles and La Moncelle. To win a great success against these, the XII Corps and the 7th Division were sent via Douzy and Lamecourt to La Moncelle, the 8th Division via Remilly to Bazeilles. It would be easy to crush with 3 divisions at each point the not too strong rearguard. The Guard Corps which could find no room in the valley of the Meuse was sent to Francheval and Villers Cernay. Its right was not even opposite the left wing of the enemy and far from being able to outflank it. A decision could hardly be reached here.

When the advance guard of the 24th Division (6 battalions, 1 battery) reached about 6:00 AM, La Moncelle, artillery and infantry could be recognized on the opposite hills in spite of the fog. One of the Saxon batteries opened fire and maintained it throughout the great French superiority

until two Bavarian batteries joined it an hour later. Two battalions took La Moncelle without encountering much resistance. The enemy retired to the heights seeking shelter in two houses on the slope. Two Saxon companies charged after them, took the houses and decided to hold them. Ten companies occupied La Moncelle and entered into communication with Bavarian troops which had extended as far as the southernmost houses of the village. Before further reinforcements could arrive, it was reported that the enemy was advancing from Daigny. General Ducrot (I Corps) was holding the bridge at Daigny believing it to be the only bridge over the Givonne which the hostile artillery could use and thought it necessary to cover it by a position on the eastern bank, charging Lartigue's Division to occupy the Bois Chevalier.

The 105th Regiment of the Saxon advance guard, was sent against it. The main body of the 24th Division had not yet arrived, but the division and corps artillery were brought up in a hurry. At 8:30 AM, south of the Lamecourt—La Moncelle road to the Rubecourt road 10 batteries opened fire against Daigny.

On the French side, command had been changed twice. MacMahon had been wounded on the heights east of La Moncelle by a shell splinter and had transferred the command to General Ducrot. The latter erroneously believed that the Army of the Meuse would surround Givonne from the north and render it untenable and thought just as erroneously that sufficient measures had been taken for the security of the Meuse strip of Sedan—Mezieres and decided to take a position on the Plateau of Illy resting his right against Sedan and his left against the inaccessible Foret des Ardenes. Under cover of this very impregnable position, the army was to start on its retreat via Mezieres. The plan would have been excellent, had not the columns of the Third Army already crossed the Meuse at Donchery.

This circumstance was known to General Wimpffen who, as a help in distress, had arrived on 30 August from Africa by way of Paris and carried two ministerial army orders in his pocket. The one named him commander of the V Corps

instead of Faily, the other appointed him commander-in-chief in case anything should befall MacMahon. In compliance with the first, he had already taken command of the V Corps, the latter he kept secret even when he heard that MacMahon had been wounded and Ducrot had been entrusted with the command. Seeing, however, that the latter, on the basis of false suppositions, was on the point of leading the army to destruction, he made use of his right, demanded the post of commander-in-chief, which was transferred to him willingly, and decided not to go back to Mezieres, but to advance to Carignan and seek in that direction the destruction, avoided in the former. The divisions of Ducrot, which had already started on the march, received a counter order. The situation which had just been altered, was re-established. Vassoigne's Division and Lacretelle's Division via La Moncelle were to execute the mighty stroke via Bazeilles. A powerful break through the enemy was to be made. A terrific artillery fire started the decisive battle from the heights east of Balan at 9:00 AM. Infantry advanced as far as the Givonne, drove back the 10 Saxon companies and showered rapid fire on the Saxon Corps artillery which had advanced to 300 paces from the trench. It had to retreat and occupy a position farther to the rear if it were not to be annihilated by the fire of the advancing sharpshooters. When, however, the latter came into the open they were received by infantry and artillery fire and forced to retreat. In the streets, houses, and gardens of Bazeilles there was still less chance of success. The fight in the streets, lulled for a while, raged more fiercely than ever. The attempt to break through the enemy had miscarried. In order to be prepared against a repetition of the danger just avoided, the march of the troops, which had remained behind, was accelerated. The 23d Division following the 24th not via Lamecourt, but on the road to Bazeilles, took part with one brigade in the combat of the Bavarians at Monvillers and kept the other as reserve at le Rulle. The Bavarian 4th Brigade advanced to La Moncelle. The Bavarian I Corps and the XII Corps were assembled on the lower Givonne, the IV advanced with the 7th Division to the right, with the 8th to the left of the Meuse

and reached at 10:00 AM, with the former Lamecourt, with the latter the railway depot of Bazeilles.

The 10th Regiment had advanced against Lartigue's Division from the western edge of Bois Chevalier to the Rubecourt—Daigny road and took up a position with one battalion in a small wood, with the two others on the right and left of this point, in order to await the arrival of the enemy advancing on a narrow front. Several attacks were repulsed, but were always repeated by fresh troops. The right wing offered protection for some time to the artillery line. But when it was forced by hostile skirmishers to retreat somewhat to the south, the three battalions were left alone and found themselves in a very critical situation, as ammunition threatened to give out. Distress was great, when a Jager battalion came to the rescue. But as it had to strain all its forces against the superior enemy, it soon lacked ammunition also. Only when another Jager battalion and finally an infantry regiment of the 24th Division had come up, a counterattack was launched against the enemy, superior in numbers but in deeper formation who, pressed on both sides could not reach quickly enough Daigny, the bridge, and the heights opposite, left 6 guns in the hands of the Saxons. Further combat at this point was limited to continuous firing, in which the French had the advantage, on account of the height of the right bank and of better cover.

In the meanwhile the Guard Corps had arrived partly from Pouru-aux-Bois, partly from Pouru-St.-Remy via Francheval at Villers Cernay. The 2d Guard Division was sent to the northern point of the Bois Chevalier to the assistance of the Saxons, the 4th Brigade still farther in the direction of Daigny. The 1st Guard Division occupied Givonne and Haybes and advanced to the wood east of Givonne. The Guard Cavalry Division covered the right flank north of the wood, the regiment of Guard Hussars covered in the direction of La Chapelle. The corps in this position was outflanked by the left flank of the enemy. There could be no thought of surrounding him. It was possible, on the other hand, that the French, by throwing in their reserves, might surround the German right wing via the wood Le

petit Terme and La Chapelle. Of the two opponents the Germans were in greater danger than the French at this point. They faced each other in a continuous combat along the line of the river. It was difficult to see how the Germans could succeed in winning a favorable decision. The initiative of subaltern leaders then brought a quick turn of affairs.

In the two isolated houses on the road to Balan west of La Moncelle two Saxon companies had maintained their position for hours, through the changes brought by the advance and retreat of the French. In order to free them from their distress an advance was made from La Moncelle and south of it, first by Bavarian and later by Saxon troops. The garrison of the two houses was relieved. All the other troops, fighting in the valley, followed this movement. The heights were attacked also from the park of Monvillers. All stormed forward to the defile leading from Bazeilles to Daigny via Hill 635. The French evacuated the position, not without resistance, and left three guns and numerous prisoners in the hands of the Germans.

The occupation of the ridge south of the La Moncelle—Balan road alarmed the defenders of Bazeilles, who saw their retreat threatened. Threatened, moreover, from the south and east by the 1st Brigade, from the west by the 5th Brigade of the Bavarian II Corps sent from the left bank of the Meuse, they started to retreat in the direction of Balan. After 7 hours of fierce fighting, the Bavarians remained masters of burning Bazeilles.

A general onrush of the Germans must be expected. During the long hours of fighting in the streets the troops had become mixed up. The entire Bavarian I Corps was taken back to be reformed. Only isolated companies, followed by the 5th Brigade, pursued the enemy through Balan and to the heights north of the village. The victors contented themselves, in general, with the occupation of the conquered position, on the left wing of which, close to the flooded meadowland, the 6th Brigade was advancing.

The commander of the Army of the Meuse had observed, since early morning the course of the combat from

a height south of Mairy across the valley of the Meuse. He was still persuaded that there was only a rearguard of the enemy at Bazeilles and La Moncelle, the main forces having been directed against the Third Army. It was imperative to help the latter as soon as possible. Orders had been given hours before that, immediately after the taking of the Givonne entrenchments, the Guard Corps should march to Fleigneux, and the XII Corps to the ridge east of St. Menges via Illy for junction with the Third Army. The Bavarian I Corps was charged to cover in the direction of Sedan the march of the Army of the Meuse. General von der Tann declared that, according to existing circumstances, he could not execute this command and asked the 8th Division to undertake the task. The division, which had come quite close and some of whose companies had taken part in the latest combats, was ready to undertake, jointly with the Bavarian 3d Division (5th and 6th Brigades) the problem set before the corps. Security against Sedan seemed thus to be established. The retreat of the Guard and XII Corps was more difficult. For not the entire entrenchment of Givonne, but only its southernmost part had been taken. The main body of the enemy might be expected above Daigny and then Balan. The XII Corps would meet it going from La Moncelle via Illy to the heights southwest of Menges, and the Guard Corps would encounter it in marching from Givonne to Fleigneux. The latter would, consequently, first drive the enemy from the heights west of Givonne, then march further to Fleigneux and prepare the attack with its artillery, sending only the Guard Cavalry Division up the valley of the Givonne along the hostile front on the road to Fleigneux. The XII Corps could have driven off the enemy standing south of the Fond de Givonne—Haybes road and then advanced to Illy. By an attack of this corps from the south, the Guard Corps from the east, the Third Army from the north and west, the enemy would have been hopelessly driven together. The XII Corps, however, wanted to reach Illy by a march along the Givonne and took its troops out of the position west of La Moncelle. The 8th Division took its position in a bend on both sides of the La Moncelle—Balan

road on Hill 635. The right wing of the Prussian infantry reached a point opposite Petite Moncelle. In rear of the left wing south of Balan stood the Bavarian 6th Brigade, the 5th penetrated into the village and would have hard fights to wage in the park of the chateau before its skirmishers could reach the glacis of Sedan. On the right, on the heights south of Fond De Givonne stood isolated companies. Their fire and that of the Prussian artillery forced the French batteries which were covering the withdrawal, to disappear soon in rear of Hill 656.

While in the corner between Balan and Fond de Givonne the French XII Corps was retreating, the right wing of the I Corps stood on the road from Bazeilles running over Hill 635 northward, fighting against the seven battalions of the 24th Division which had occupied Daigny. In one line, side by side, separated only by Hill 705, stood the Germans, fronting west, and the French, fronting east, in a fierce conflict. This situation of utter harmlessness must be broken up, when the 23d German Division started at about 1:00 PM, with the 45th Brigade (9 battalions, 4 batteries) on the western valley road, with the 46th Brigade (six battalions) first behind the 45th then on the eastern valley road from Monvillers past La Moncelle. The advance guard of the 45th Brigade met with unexpected enemies in the woods west of Daigny. Six companies were sent to the left and the march was continued under their cover. The ever increasing violence of the rifle fire decided the Division Commander, General Montbe, to halt the head of the left column at Haybes, and to send 6 more companies to the hill on the left and to deploy with 6 battalions and 4 batteries on the eastern edge of the valley. The 7 battalions of the 24th Division were to hold Daigny. Thirteen battalions, and four batteries were kept in reserve, while 3 battalions only were designated for the attack. Fortunately the latter were joined by two Grenadier battalions of the Kaiser Franz Regiment.⁽³⁶⁾ They pursued the enemy when he was driven out of the woods, and ascended by companies and battalions the west-

⁽³⁶⁾ They were at the head of the 2d Guard Division sent to Daigny.

ern heights. Upon reaching the upper edge of the valley, they were met by battalions and batteries in close order.

General Wimpffen had decided to make another attempt to break through the enemy at 1:00 PM. He deemed it possible to drive the already exhausted Bavarians to the Meuse and thus to open a road to Carignan. Vassoigne's Division driven back and likewise exhausted, reinforced by a few regiments of infantry and battalions of Zouaves, was to march through Bazeilles. Goze's Division was designated for a secondary attack in the direction of Daigny and Grandchamp's Division was sent in rear of the latter as its left echelon. Emperor Napoleon was invited to take part in the undertaking for the purpose of being the first to ride to freedom at the head of his faithful troops. While Wimpffen was waiting on the site of the old camp at Vieux for the principal person, Goze moved to Daigny and met, close to his goal, the five Saxon-Prussian battalions which had ascended the edge of the valley between Daigny and Haybes for the protection of Montbe's left flank. At a run, rifles at the hip, firing continually, the deep columns stormed forward. The shells of the rapidly firing German artillery tore gaps in the masses or hurled them down. Swarms only remained and stormed on still firing, but were so broken up by the calmly firing skirmishers that only a few brave men reached the German line, where they were either killed or captured. Two companies of the 101st Regiment, one battalion of the Rifle Regiment and the two battalions of the Kaiser Franz Regiment pursued the remnants in the direction of Fond de Givonne. As soon as the ridge on either side of the Fond de Givonne—Haybes road had fallen into the hands of the Saxons, the corps artillery units of the 45th Brigade and the divisional artillery were dispatched via Givonne, the 46th Brigade was directed into that village, and the 24th Division was assembled and placed in reserve east of Daigny.

Thus the Army of the Meuse and the three Bavarian divisions succeeded after 3:00 PM, in gaining a firm footing on the ridge on the right bank of the Givonne between Bazeilles and Haybes. One Bavarian Division had been sent toward Sedan via Balan. The 1st Guard Division had occupied Givonne on the right, while 10 batteries had gone into

position on the heights east of the village. Army headquarters wished to limit itself so far to these results, leaving the rest to the Third Army which had, so far, contributed not a little to the success achieved.

Map 100.

This Army had built during the night two temporary bridges below the bridge of Donchery and had sent detachments across the Meuse for the protection of these three crossings. After crossing the river early in the morning, the XI Corps marched in three columns, in expectation of a battle, against the enemy, who had been observed in retreat between St. Menges and Mezieres, via Montimont, Briancourt, and Marancourt to Vrigne-aux-Bois, the V with one column to Vivier-au-Court (Map 99). The Wurttemberg Division threw a bridge across at Dom-le-Mesnil and accompanied the two corps as a left echelon. As not even a patrol of the enemy was seen during the march, army headquarters ordered a turn to the right toward St. Menges. The execution of the order seemed to raise apprehension. It was to be expected that the defile of the Falizette ravine would be found hermetically closed and that Vincy would advance from Mezieres against the rear of the column marching to the right. This general, however, limited himself to secondary undertakings against the crossings of the Meuse which could be easily repulsed by the Wurttemberg division, and the defile at Falizette was found unoccupied. The leading elements encountered the enemy only at St. Menges. The village was taken and occupied and one company sent to Hill 812 south of the same and two to Floing. The latter succeeded in occupying the northern part of the village against superior hostile forces which held the southern half and the hill in rear of it, while the former occupied a small wood surrounded by walls. Reinforced by several companies, it formed the cover for the 14 batteries of the XI Corps which trotted past the marching column, gradually compressed, going into position on the hill between St. Menges and Floing and opened fire on the French artillery which was in a much more favorable position on the southern ridge between Calvaire d'Illy and Floing.

In the meanwhile, the infantry of the 21st Division had been sent beyond the artillery to Fleigneux and Illy in the upper valley of the Givonne. Under its cover, 12 batteries of the V Corps went into position on the ridge between Fleigneux and Illy. To complete the deployment, the 43d Brigade was to turn from St. Albert to Floing, the 10th Division to take up position between St. Menges and Fleigneux, the 9th on the Champ de la Grange. The enemy was cut off on the north. Not only vehicles, but even cavalry and artillery, attempting to flee at the last moment via Illy or Fleigneux, were driven back or captured. The problem now was to drive the enemy from the north back to Sedan and toward the Army of the Meuse.

General Wimpffen had thought, in the beginning, that the fights at St. Menges were only demonstrations which were to prevent him from supporting the troops on the lower Givonne. The increasing cannonade in the northwest caused him to inquire personally into the condition of the right of the VII Corps.

Since the commanding general, Douay, recommended the reinforcement of the garrisons of Calvaire d'Illy and Bois de la Carenne, General Wimpffen ordered the two divisions of the I Corps, l'Herriller's and Pelle's standing in reserve, to be called and himself hastened back to the XII Corps. He found that corps in full retreat and sent word to Douay to support him with all the troops he could spare. The latter sent Mousson's Brigade, attached to his command, and, on repeated request, one division of his corps was also sent in the direction of Bazeilles. The troops of the I Corps, which were to support the VII, and troops of the VII Corps which were to support the XII, were still occupied in the Bois de la Garenne, in marching to the north and south respectively, when the 26 batteries, on the heights of St. Menges and Fleigneux, directed their full fire against the hostile position and the Calvaire d'Illy. They found a very strong support in the Guard batteries east of Givonne. Many French guns were shattered under the crossfire of these two artillery lines or silenced through the loss of their gunners, a great number of caissons were exploded and the assembled

Map 101.

troops forced to retreat into the Bois de la Garenne. Some isolated guns and batteries still kept their ground and, with the infantry which had remained behind, rendered a storm impossible. Only seven companies of the 82d and 87th Regiments got as far as Illy and occupied the southern edge. Under their fire and that of the two artillery lines the defenders of the advanced bulwark melted more and more. The Guard Cavalry Division, arriving on its march up the Givonne at La Foulerie, sent two platoons of the 3d Uhlans of the Guard, followed by one squadron, up the hill. They penetrated to the batteries, and took one gun, but had to return, driven off by the fire from Bois de la Garenne. The retreat of the defenders was, nevertheless, hastened by the bold deed and a company from Illy was able to reach, almost without losses, the Calvaire, take position there and open fire on the well defended northern edge of the wood.

General Douay quickly assembled a few battalions and charged the lost hill repeatedly. Every time he took it, he was forced to abandon it, by the infantry fire from Illy and artillery fire from front, flank, and rear. The 82d, 87th, and 80th Regiments occupied finally the Calvaire d'Illy and the strip from Hill 920 as far as the Givonne near la Foulerie. Opposite them the enemy held the edge of the wood.

Map 100.

Greater trouble than the Calvaire d'Illy was caused the attacker by the other wing of the French north front. The two companies, occupying the northern part of Floing, held out for two hours without support. Gradually, in spite of the fierce artillery fire, one company after another was sent to their reinforcement from the main position in rear. When sufficient forces had been assembled, a surrounding attack was made against the southern part of the village, the enemy driven back after a bloody battle and the lower slope of the neighboring hill in front of the southeastern edge of the village occupied. The companies of the 83d, 87th, and 46th Regiments weakened by obstinate fighting, did not feel able to take the steep hill on the southeast and Liebert's Division did not believe that the long disputed village could be torn from the victors. Being in a supposedly impregnable position, it awaited the attack.

To facilitate that attack, the 43d Brigade had turned from St. Albert to Floing, leaving this point on the east, and deployed against the line: Gaulier—La Maladrie. The advance was made with the right on the Meuse at the south end of Cazal, the left wing straight up the slope. As soon as the Brigade had started its movement, the garrison of Floing joined in the attack of the line: la Maladrie—the cemetery. It was not an easy thing to climb the steep ascent from point to point, from thicket to thicket, under the fire and counter-attacks of the enemy. The attack was repeatedly thrown back to Floing. Lieutenant von Bardeleben succeeded in bringing eight guns into position on Hill 812 close to the slope. The artillery fire from north and west soon mowed down the defenders of the narrow plateau. The turning of Gaulier helped to shake their steadfastness. The Germans succeeded in winning the hill. As soon as the skirmish lines climbed the steep ascents and reached the edge of the plateau, they were charged by cavalry. Margueritte's Division had come up from the Bois de la Garenne to give a new aspect to the day. The mass of troopers had already been thrown into confusion on the road to Floing by the flank fire of the Prussian batteries and the obstacles in the terrain. Still the charge was executed with impetus and utter self-sacrifice. The thin lines of skirmishers were overridden at the first impact. Even the battery position was entered. A few detachments charged into Floing and even into St. Albert causing confusion among trains and vehicles. At many points hand to hand fights ensued. With bayonet, saber, and rammers did the Germans defend themselves against the furious attacks of the French. But the calm fire of the steadfast rifles finally broke the strength of the powerful rush. Repeated attacks only met with stronger resistance since the advancing infantry had reached in large numbers the edge of the plateau and nestled in the abandoned entrenchments.

Map 101.

The 43d Brigade pursued the retreating enemy and penetrated to the eastern edge of Cazal. Pursuit stopped here, 300 paces from the fortress. The 17th Brigade was sent as support. The former garrison of Floing went in an

easterly direction along the road to the Querimont Farm, and struck there the left flank of those portions of Liebert's Division which were endeavoring to hold to the last the center of the French position. Against these General von Kurchbach directed the 19th Brigade, from Fleigneux along Fleigneux Creek. The brigade was joined by several companies of the XI Corps, which had been employed up to that time as artillery supports, garrisons of villages, etc. They crossed the valley of Illy under severe losses, ascended the northern ridge between Calvaire d'Illy and Floing, drove off the troops at that point, and, with the help of the companies advancing from Floing, and the support of a few batteries which accompanied them, stormed the southern ridge. The enemy was driven back into the Bois de la Garenne. From the Meuse along the eastern edge of Cazal and the western edge of the woods as far as Calvaire d'Illy, and thence to La Foulerie, the Germans cut the enemy off from the west and north.

The greater portions of the I and VII Corps, together with the reinforcements which had been sent up from the south, infantry, cavalry, and artillery, all in confusion, assembled and sought refuge in the Bois de la Garenne, which rose from the battlefield between the Meuse, Givonne, St. Menges, and Fleigneux, and commanded all the surrounding heights. Upon these masses, artillery fire was directed from the north, northwest, and east. The Guard Artillery, which had advanced closer to the Givonne, fired deliberately by battery and by piece on the woods east of the Sedan—Illy road. When the guns seemed to have obtained sufficient effect, the advance guard and the 1st Guard Brigade entered the woods from the northeast in the direction of Querimont, while the 45th Brigade penetrated into the southeastern part. The completely disorganized French troops retreated, though not without resistance, in the direction of Sedan. They were met on the road by companies of the XI and V Corps from the west, by the 1st Battalion of the Rifle Regiment from the east, and by two battalions of the Kaiser Franz Regiment which had advanced to the quarries north of Fond de Givonne.

Since Emperor Napoleon refused his cooperation in the "useless undertaking," Wimpffen was forced to make the attempt of breaking through at Bazeilles alone. By an enveloping attack toward Balan, he succeeded, with his superior forces, in gradually driving back the weak Bavarian 5th Brigade and the reinforcements which had been brought to it from the 6th.

This attack, however, went to pieces against the troops arriving from Bazeilles and La Moncelle and under the fire of the Prussian batteries on Hill 635. Repeated orders of the Emperor to enter into negotiations with the enemy accelerated the decision to withdraw. It was high time to bring the battle to a close. The batteries of the Bavarian II Corps, which had remained on the left bank of the Meuse, and of the Wurttemberg Division had opened fire against Sedan itself and the Crown Prince of Saxony had already ordered the XII and the Guard Corps to move their batteries into effective range of the fortress.

The negotiations, begun late in the evening, resulted at 11:00 AM the next day in the surrender of 118,000 men, including 14,000 wounded, and 549 guns.

A battle of Cannae had at last been fought, a complete surrounding of the enemy achieved. None of the great generals of the last century had known the course of that battle on the Aufidus. Only its final results floated before their eyes as a goal to be striven for. King Frederick, when almost sufficient forces were at his disposition at the beginning of the Seven Years' War, invested the Saxons at Pirna, the Austrians at Prague. But with this his means were at an end. His remaining forces were not strong enough to attack on all sides a second Austrian army, which was coming to the rescue. He therefore limited himself at Kolin to containing the front and striking the annihilating blow at the right flank. The Prussian left wing, designated to make this attack, struck only the extended front of the Austrians. The weak Prussian army, moreover was not strong enough for a frontal attack against the strong position; it was en-

veloped on both flanks and suffered a complete rout. Taught by experience, Frederick left the front at Leuthen quite free, turned with his 35,000 men the 65,000 of Prince Charles of Lorraine and attacked his left flank. The Austrians hastily faced toward the threatened side in a deep narrow mass and could now be enveloped on their new front from right and left. They were defeated and compelled through this forced change of front, to retreat by the flank under heavy losses. At Zorndorf the surrounding movement was continued until the Prussian army stood in rear of the Russian army, which hurriedly faced right about. The Russians were driven against the Oder by enveloping attacks, first against the right, then against the left flank. They were almost surrounded. One more attack and they would have been annihilated. But such a last attack could never have been carried through by the exhausted Prussians, even as victors against the power of resistance of the Russians. They would have been decimated and rendered unfit for the continuation of the war. The Russians had a door opened to them by which they could escape. They were not annihilated but eliminated for that campaign. When they returned the following year, Frederick wanted to attack them from four sides at Kunersdorf and, in spite of their superior numbers, annihilate them. The attack broke against the specially strong position of the enemy and was transformed into an annihilating defeat. One thing had, however, been won by this Cannæ: the Russians continued to ruin, burn, and plunder the Prussian territory, but under no circumstances would they allow themselves to be enticed into a battle with Frederick. The mere report "the King is coming" sufficed to make them flee.

Frederick abandoned perforce the attacks from four sides and at Torgau tried an attack against front and rear. The attack was repulsed, but the fire from front and rear proved insupportable. The Austrians retreated in the night by the only flank left open to them. Only after peace had been concluded with Russia and this peace was followed by an alliance, did Frederick return to the normal attack against front, flank, and rear. The Austrians, however, were able

to avoid the surrounding movement in time, since the Russians, to whom was entrusted the frontal or holding attack, limited themselves to a demonstration.

Napoleon likewise preceded his annihilating battles by turning movements which, however, were not executed, like those of Frederick, with a minority in the vicinity of the battlefield, but carrying him after days and weeks in a wide arc with vastly superior numbers, into the rear of the enemy. He then attacked enveloping both his wings, or better still, allowed the weaker enemy to attack him, in order to strike the annihilating blow after the exhaustion of his opponent. From the very beginning he made Hasdrubal's decisive attack on the enemy's rear, his principal stroke, just as had been done at Zorndorf and Torgau, enveloped his opponent in rear and on both flanks, and left open to the Austrians and Prussians only the front in the direction of France. Thither they might go, followed by superior forces. This brought at Marengo and Ulm, the immediate annihilation of the enemy. At Jena it had to be attained by a lengthy pursuit. The battle which had begun at Vierzehnheiligen, was brought to a tragic conclusion at Prenzlau and Ratkau. Likewise the Beresina, in the campaign of Moscow, put on the seal of a terrible Cannae, as the piercing at Hanau brought about the conclusion of the gigantic conflict of 1813.

In the campaign of Prussian-Eylau the turning movement did not lead against the rear, but against the flank of the enemy, who knew how to escape through a small turning movement likewise. Napoleon stood opposite the weaker enemy. A mass attack against the front, a weak attack against one flank, strong reserves held back, were to bring the solution of the simple problem. It was brought about in a contrary sense by the opponent, who outflanked the weak flanking attack. Frederick the Great failed in many a battle of annihilation, because his forces were too small and he had nevertheless dared the utmost. Napoleon failed at Prussian-Eylau, because he had spent too much on a frontal attack, left too much in reserve and used too little on the decisive flank attack.

A risk lies in every turning and surrounding movement. The opponents of Frederick as well as of Napoleon had to learn this. They also wanted to fight a battle of annihilation, turn the enemy with superior forces and attack him in flank or rear. The plan failed at Rossbach, Liegnitz, and Austerlitz, because the enemy on his part struck the head of the turning columns with superior strength.

Once more did Napoleon fight an almost annihilating battle. The enemy placed himself at Friedland in a position exceedingly favorable for his annihilation. He had his rear against the Alle, the front against an enemy of almost double his strength and, moreover, burnt the bridge which alone could help him to escape. The annihilation did not entirely succeed because Napoleon attacked only one flank and the front, leaving the other flank free in order to keep strong reserves in case of eventualities. These strong reserves could not decide his battle but could indeed lessen his victories.

According to the principle of Cannæ a broad battle line goes forth against a narrower, but generally deeper one. The overlapping wings turn against the flanks, the cavalry preceding them, against the rear. Should the flanks be separated from the center, for some reason or other, it is not necessary to assemble them against the latter in order to continue jointly the march for a surrounding attack, as they can immediately advance, by the shorter road, against flank or rear. This was what Moltke called "the junction of separated units on the field of battle" and declares it the highest achievement of a general. It is also the most effective and, of course, the most risky. Most generals and almost all able commanders apprehend the danger of the units being defeated before their junction and zealously endeavor to execute the junction of separate units, and on the battlefield itself, but as long as possible before the battle. In this manner they relinquish the decisive result and must be satisfied with a lesser or with no result whatever. The former was experienced by Napoleon at Regensburg, the latter at Gross-Gorschen, for the good of humanity, and Moltke would have experienced the one or the other had he listened to the advice of his contemporaries

and subsequent critics and had in the beginning assembled the three armies at Koniggratz on the base line. There exists, it is true, the danger of having one part defeated, or at least driven back. Cannae itself shows this, also Blucher in 1813 at Lowenberg, and Schwarzenberg at Dresden, and the Prussian First Army might have shown it at Koniggratz had Benedek started early in the morning of the 3d of July to fall upon Prince Frederick Charles with his entire force. The consequences would have been that the victor would soon have had to leave the vanquished in order to turn against one of the enemies who were threatening his flanks, that the defeated opponent would again advance, and so through apparent victory the final surrounding and annihilation would be materially furthered, if it were not thus made entirely possible. This is shown by the campaign of 1813 and the wars of 1815 and 1866. In order to defeat one of the separated enemies and destroy him with combined forces, the remainder must be so far away that no interference can be expected from them as at Prague in 1757. Should they come closer, the assembled forces must be divided for parry. Units fight units. The weaker enemy, standing in the center has no preponderance anywhere and is lost as soon as it is possible to assemble the forces of the stronger opponent on the battlefield, as at Leipzig, Waterloo, or Koniggratz. The weaker opponent Frederick, would have been lost at Bunzelwitz, if the Russians and Austrians, intimidated by previous experience, had not renounced the difficult attack.

It is desirable to have, for any kind of Cannae, the numerical superiority in one's favor. Moltke had to create it in 1870. A large crushing coalition threatened Germany. Moltke held to the principle for which he had fought in 1866: no observation corps, no armies, where there is no enemy. All the 16 corps were destined for France. The French Army assembled in Lorraine and Alsace to cross the Rhine above Karlsruhe and invade South Germany. It was easy for the Germans to stem the stream of the invasion. As Napoleon in 1806 turned the front of the Prussian army assembled north of the Thuringian forest, by rapid marches from the right, Moltke turned by railway

transportation the French front on the upper Rhine and appeared at the central course of the river between Karlsruhe and Koblenz. Napoleon's turning movement drew the Prussians to the banks of the Saale, that of Moltke drew the French to the Saar and Lauter. Both enveloped armies wanted, after they had been completely turned, to attack the turning columns as at Rossbach. This intrepid intention, executed lamely, had a sorry end at Saalfeld in 1806, and would have in 1870 led to the attack on all sides of the French Army had it advanced in a general line: Mayence—Manheim, which would hardly have been permitted to recross the Saar. A premonition of what might happen held Napoleon back. Thus the German armies were able to advance to the Saar and Lauter. It would have corresponded to the Napoleonic strategy of 1806, if the Germans in 1870 had crossed the Meuse with their right wing and had forced the French, did the latter accept or refuse battle, in a southerly direction to the Rhine and the Swiss frontier. The incomplete railway net of 40 years ago did not allow such an operation. The left wing, to the detriment of the right, had to be made very strong and was to bring the decision. The Third Army should have started two days earlier to throw back the enemy, who were assembling in Alsace, and to attack by turning to the right, the French main army in flank and rear, while the First and Second Armies attacked its front. The plan failed because the First and Second Armies had started too early and the Third too late. The French Army was defeated in Alsace, but in Lorraine it could retreat to Metz, only slightly damaged. With the great numerical superiority of the Germans it would have been most simple to follow the enemy and to turn with the two overlapping wings against his flanks after a strong cavalry had stopped the retreat. The equipment and armament of the cavalry divisions did not appear to allow such operations at the time, although the 5th Cavalry Division stopped parts of the French Army on 15 and 16 August, at Vionville, from further advance and even forced them to retreat. The cavalry might have solved the problem given by General von Alvensleben to the III Corps on 16 August, i.e., the halting of the hostile

army and, if necessary the gradual retreat toward Verdun, but it also would have gained time for the German Corps to achieve a Cannae by coming up from both sides, or at least from one. Such unusual cavalry operations had not been foreseen. Moltke resolved to turn the enemy with all three armies, accompany him, if necessary in parallel pursuit, on his retreat to Metz, turn to the right at a favorable moment and drive him to the Luxemburg and Belgian frontiers, thus completing the surrounding movement. The plan was furthered by the halt which the fortress of Metz and the battle of Colombey forced upon the French retreat, but was spoiled by the slowness and irresolution of the movements of the German armies, by the small number of bridges over the Moselle, the unfavorable network of roads on the left bank and not a little by the cautious hesitancy of Bazaine, to give up connection with the protecting fortress. The Marshal was not without reason persuaded that, if Metz were abandoned and the open reached, he would be attacked on all sides and annihilated. Nevertheless Moltke's intention would probably have been fulfilled if General von Barnekow had been allowed on 16 August to advance through the Bois des Ognons with the 25th Division and through the Bois de Vaux against the road: Rezonville—Point du Jour. It would have been difficult for Bazaine to find a road which was not either barred by the enemy or swept by his fire. He would have gone in the northerly direction that Moltke wished him to take. But since Barnekow had been used, as customary, for fruitless frontal attacks and the 25th Division could only come up very late in his stead, the principal road of retreat was left open to the French. The Germans had to give up the annihilation of the enemy for the time and be satisfied with his investment in Metz, i.e., with hopes for the future.

MacMahon also had to be driven by frontal attacks and attacks against his right flank toward the Belgian frontier. Since, however, the position of the camp near Chalons or Rheims did not offer sufficient advantages for defense, MacMahon wanted to retire to Paris, before being seriously threatened. The difficult situation of the Germans was completely changed in their favor by MacMahon's forced march

from Rheims to Stenay and Metz. The problem of the Germans was hence to attack in a turning movement an army of comparatively small strength, marching from west to east, and to drive it against the not distant frontier of Belgium. Since two corps of the investing army in reserve could be easily brought up, the roads leading east and south could be blocked. Only the retreat west had to be left open for the present. MacMahon wanted to use this only outlet upon hearing of the advance of the Germans, but was immediately driven by Paris to inevitable destruction. Had the ten and one half German corps advanced with the right wing via Longuyon along the Belgian frontier, with the left, via Reithel, over all the existing roads in one line, the four French corps would have been gradually, but surely, driven to the Belgian frontier, whether they marched left or right, forward or back. Should they attack or oppose resistance on one or the other road, the German corps, using these same roads in an opposite direction would give them battle. The remaining corps, however, would march further in the initial direction, first to see if there were enemies in front of them, and further because they would have but one march to make to strike the enemy's flank and give effective support to the neighboring corps.

The Army of the Meuse did not wish to solve so simply the problem, laid before it on 30 August. It had three enemies before it—on the Sommauthe—La Besace road, at Beaumont, on the Mouzon—Stenay road and apparently also at Carignan. Should the two Bavarian corps be left on that road and the Army of the Meuse send the IV Corps to Beaumont, and the Guard and XII Corps to the right bank of the Meuse, it would have driven the three enemies before it and, what was still more important, would have barred their way to east and south. Army headquarters, however, did not wish to divide its forces, but wanted to assemble the five corps, three in the first line and two in the second in front of Beaumont. This freed at least two enemies who, without evil intent, forced by the measures taken by the Germans and also by their omissions, were forced to attack the flanks of the latter and at least show them what might have happened had there been, in their place, strong, reso-

lute and enterprising enemies. The attack against the enemy at Beaumont, being made not with the power of twenty brigades, as intended, but, through lack of space, by two, the combat of five to one was very unfavorable and might have had a sorry end, if a division commander in his zeal to get at the enemy, had not lengthened the front, forced him to retire by outflanking him and thus somewhat hastened the planned retreat of the French. The result, bought by severe losses, amounted to just this acceleration. On the whole, the enemy, who must be pitilessly encircled, was freed from all molestation and could retire calmly and without danger in either of two directions. He fortunately, failed to use the advantage offered him by the generous enemy, and, after a short march, halted again in resignation to his fate before the annihilating blow, and, fortunately, Moltke was there to unravel the gigantic mass into which the two German armies had assembled and to render possible an attack from three sides, and later from four.

The numerical superiority of the Germans was so great that they might have executed the investment completely and yet could have given free scope to their inclination to mass troops on the narrowest space on the eastern front. It would not have been expedient to have been so extravagant, had the enemy extended his troops a little more in the strip along the Meuse between Sedan and Mezieres. A lengthening of the German wing beyond Mezieres would then have been necessary. The forces on hand would still have sufficed to send one corps by each road, so that the average length which Moltke wanted to give the marching columns, after the experience of 1870, might have been reached in order to render a timely deployment possible. Whether or not he would have retained this form after the length of a corps column, without trains, had increased from 15 to 29 km. remains unanswered.

A complete battle of Cannae is rarely met in history. For its achievement, a Hannibal is needed on the one side, and a Terentius Varro, on the other, both cooperating for the attainment of the great goal.

A Hannibal must possess, if not a superiority in numbers, the knowledge how to create one. It is desirable for

this purpose that the general combine in himself something of a Scharnhorst, a Frederick William, or William I, to weld together a strong army, of a Moltke, to assemble it solely against the principal enemy, of a Frederick the Great, to bring all his guns and rifles into action, of a Frederick the Great or a Napoleon, to direct the principal attack against the flank or rear, of a Frederick the Great or a Moltke to replace the absent Hasdrubal by a natural obstacle or the frontier of a neutral state. Lastly, there are needed subordinate commanders, well trained in their profession, and able to comprehend the intentions of their chiefs.

A Terentius Varro has a great army, but does not do his best to increase and train it. He does not assemble his forces against the principal enemy. He does not wish to vanquish by fire superiority from several sides, but by the weight of masses in narrow and deep formations, selecting for attack the hostile front as being the side most capable of resistance.

All these desirable conditions will not be found combined on either side. A few of Hannibal's qualities and some of the means at his disposal were possessed by other generals. Terentius Varro, on the other side, was always the product of the school. Thus it happened, that, though no real Cannæ, with the exception of Sedan, has been fought, there has been a whole series of nearly annihilating battles, and these have always been found at the turning points of history.